

A STUDY OF CERTAIN
BACKGROUND FACTORS AND THE PRESENT STATUS
OF PUPILS WHO DROPPED OUT
OF THE LA CROSSE, KANSAS, RURAL HIGH SCHOOL
FROM 1940 TO 1955

by

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PURPOSE OF STUDY

This study, completed in the summer of 1955, was undertaken for the primary purpose of discovering ways of improving the holding power of the La Crosse, Kansas, Rural High School.

Thru the study of certain background factors and the present status of pupils who had withdrawn before graduating from the high school from 1940 to 1955, certain conclusions relative to improving the school's holding power were drawn. Areas covered included: personal factors, family factors, school factors, withdrawal factors, occupational history, present situation, future educational outlook, and suggestions for improving the holding power of the school.

Findings of certain other studies have been noted, and, wherever applicable, their agreement or disagreement with the La Crosse data have been pointed out.

PROCEDURES USED IN STUDY

Data gathered in this study were secured thru three main procedures: from school records, from interviews, and from questionnaires.

INTRODUCTION

Every September since 1950 the number of youths between the ages of 14 and 17 who have made their way up the steps of the secondary schools of the United States has exceeded the seven million mark. However, another one million of their

friends in the same age group have directed their steps away from the high schools of this country.¹ Of those entering the nation's schools each year, about 44 per cent will be missing when their class files across the stage four years later to receive their diplomas.²

Although every youth is not educable because of health, mental, or other reasons, the most of these 44 per cent are capable of benefiting from a high school education. The problem lies in getting them into the classrooms and keeping them there in an attitude of learning.

Educators, parent-teacher organizations, civic groups, and lay people are becoming more and more concerned over the drop-out problem. They recognize that too much of the brain power of this country is being drained off in fruitless channels, or is being stagnated thru disuse.

The problem is everywhere. Metropolitan, city, village, and rural high schools are all struggling with the situation of the pupil who wishes to withdraw before finishing high school. "What can we do to keep the student until he graduates, and, at the same time give him something worthwhile?" is the question to be answered. This study attempts to provide some answers for at least one rural high school.

¹Gaumnitz, Walter H. "High School Retention: How Does Your State Rate?" School Life, 35:69-71, February, 1953.

²Shibler, Herman L. "Attacking the Drop-Out Problem." NEA Journal, 44:25, January, 1955.

FINDINGS OF OTHER STUDIES

Because of the seriousness of the drop-out problem in the United States, a number of studies relating to it have been undertaken by various educational institutions, governmental agencies, groups, and individuals. One of the best over-all views of this decade is that given by the United States Office of Education which reported in the 1945-46 Statistical Summary of Education that only "41.9 per cent of (the) 1938-39 fifth grade pupils ... graduated from high school in 1946."¹ This percentage disregards any migration during the period.

Some progress is being made each year. The NBA Journal reported in January, 1955, that about 56 per cent of each entering class are currently completing the four-year course.² Altho subsequent data in this study will indicate that progress in the country as a whole is being made very slowly, at least some improvement should be discernible each succeeding year.

Trends in Educational Attainment 1940-1950

Almost 10 million adults 25 years and over had in 1950 completed less than five years of school, according to data secured from the 1950 United States Census. Five years or less of schooling is considered as "functional illiteracy." In the United States as a whole, functional illiteracy showed a decline

¹Office of Education, Circular No. 269. Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1950. p. 7.

²Shibler, loc. cit.

of only 4.7 per cent since 1940.¹

The highest rate of functional illiteracy was 28.7 per cent in Louisiana, and the lowest was 3.9 per cent in Iowa. Kansas had slightly less than 5.5 per cent.²

Absolute illiteracy dropped one per cent during the decade mentioned, from 4.2 per cent in 1940 to 3.2 per cent in 1950. Also on the side of improvement, it was found that "every state in the Union showed a higher average of educational attainment in 1950 than in 1940, measured by the number of years of schooling completed by adults 25 years of age and over." The median years of school completed for urban, rural non-farm, and farm population 25 years of age and over, 1940-1950, are as follows:

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1940</u>
Urban	10.2	8.7
Rural non-farm	8.8	8.4
Rural farm	8.4	7.7

This report pointed out that ". . . today's young adults, regardless of color, sex, or place of residence, have received more schooling than any other age group." Some of this progress may be attributed to the fact that the gap is narrowing between the education of the whites and non-whites.³ Statisticians for the 1960 and 1970 censuses may be able to point out interesting data relative to an even more pronounced narrowing of the gap and reducing of the absolute and functional illiteracy

¹Brunner, Edmund deS. "Trends in Educational Attainment, 1940-1950." Teachers College Record, 55:191-6, January, 1954.

²Loc. cit.

³Loc. cit.

percentages because of desegregation.

There is much to do yet toward getting the non-white segment of the population thru the high schools. This is indicated by the following figures which show the "percentage of all living adults who have completed high school or more":¹

	<u>White</u>	<u>Non-white</u>
1950 (35-39 year olds)	42.5%	14.5%
1950 (25-29 year olds)	55.2%	22.8%

Unless the federal trend is sharply checked, it is estimated that the 1950 figure of 1,741,000 youth from 12 thru 17 years of age who are not in school could increase by 1960 to 2,504,000.² Over-all probabilities seem to indicate a slowly advancing educational status among American citizens, based on the fact there are 12 per cent more 16- and 17-year olds in school since World War II, and there are 40 per cent more 18- and 19-year olds.³

High School Retention

Let us now consider the problem mentioned in the preceding paragraph--that of retention in the high schools. The vaunted objective of the high schools has been to keep all youth in school until they are 18 years of age. How well are these objectives being achieved? The following data show six states that are characteristic of the "High School Youth Retention

¹Loc. cit.

²Office of Education. Op. cit., p. 36.

³Brunner, loc. cit.

Indices, by States, 1950."¹

	Population Ages 14-17 inclusive	Pupils "in schools" Ages 14-17, U. S. Census Report			Enrollment, grades 9-10, public and private high schools		
		number	: ratio	: rank	number	: ratio	: rank
U.S.	8,019,870	7,067,790	88.1		6,369,096	79.4	
Utah	46,195	42,860	92.8	1	39,355	85.2	10
Mass.	234,425	203,080	86.6	17	241,062	102.3	1
Kans.	108,110	92,250	86.3	20	82,260	76.1	27
Ken- tucky	203,465	142,255	69.9	48	108,201	53.2	45
S. Car- olina	158,955	114,475	72.0	47	80,450	50.6	48

According to these indices, Utah and Massachusetts have the best retention records, and Kentucky and South Carolina rate in the lowest category. Kansas is neither the best nor the worst, ranking about midway among the 48 states.

Slight discrepancies in the above table, such as the 102.8 per cent enrollment in the Massachusetts' ninth and tenth grades, are attributable to age-grade differences of enrollees. Sample studies suggest that 18 per 100 of the 14- to 17-year olds in school are not in high school, 15 are in the grades below and 3 are in college. They also suggest that 14 per 100 of those in high school are not 14-17 years old, 6 are below 14, and 8 are 18 or older.²

Altho there is statistical proof that today only about 80 per cent of the American children entering school reach the ninth grade and only about half are present on graduation day, a

¹Gaumnitz, loc. cit.
²Loc. cit.

look at the past will serve to show the progress that has been made during the last 65 years. Percentage ratios of the high school youth of the United States as a whole are as follows:¹

1890 -	7	out of	100	were	in	high	school
1900 -	11	out of	100	were	in	high	school
1910 -	15	out of	100	were	in	high	school
1920 -	32	out of	100	were	in	high	school
1930 -	51	out of	100	were	in	high	school
1940 -	73	out of	100	were	in	high	school
1950 -	79	out of	100	were	in	high	school

Of those who graduate, 34 per cent go on to college full time, and 12 per cent receive some type of part-time higher education. The great waste in human resources lies in the 20 per cent who have the ability to do college work, yet do not even finish high school.²

This, then, is the question: How can youth be kept in school until they have attained their maximum educable level?

Enrollment and Graduation Trends

Beyond the subject of high school retention is the topic of enrollment and graduation trends. On the basis of historical data, it is often possible to predict with a fair degree of accuracy future trends and developments.

Toby Oxtoby, Robert Mugge, and Dael Wolfle, members of the Commission on Human Resources and Advanced Training, made certain predictions in regard to the enrollment and graduation trends of the United States. Their projections are statements

¹Loc. cit.

²Shibler, loc. cit.

of what will happen "if the trends have been accurately determined and if those trends do not change." Their projections--based on reports of the Office of Education, the Federal Security Administration, and the United States Census--are as follows:¹

Enrollment in Elementary and Secondary Schools

1919-20	17,794,000	Elementary	100.3% of population	6-13
	2,500,000	Secondary	32.3% of population	14-17
1952-53	22,681,000	Elementary	104.0% of population	6-13
	7,377,000	Secondary	82.4% of population	14-17
1957-58	27,673,000	Elementary	104.0% of population	6-13
	9,172,000	Secondary	85.9% of population	14-17
1965-66	12,920,000	Secondary	91.5% of population	14-17

High School Graduation and College Entrants (first time)

1929-30	667,000	HS Graduates	23.3% of population	18
	330,000	Col. Entrants	49.5% of HS Graduates	
1952-53	1,265,000	HS Graduates	57.7% of population	18
	441,000	Col. Entrants	34.9% of HS Graduates	
1968-69	2,583,000	HS Graduates	70.5% of population	18
	912,000	Col. Entrants	35.3% of HS Graduates	

College Degrees Received

1919-20	43,500	First degrees	2.6% of population	22
	4,100	Master's degrees	9.7% of bachelor degrees	
	690	Doctor's degrees	1.49% of bachelor degrees	
1952-53	273,000	First degrees	12.0% of population	22
	47,300	Master's degrees	17.0% of bachelor degrees	
	5,660	Doctor's degrees	2.03% of bachelor degrees	
1972-73	656,000	First degrees	18.0 % of population	22
	131,400	Master's degrees	21.5 % of bachelor degrees	
	15,040	Doctor's degrees	2.38% of bachelor degrees	

¹extoby, Toby, Robert Mugge, and Dael Wolffe. "Enrollment and Graduation Trends: from Grade School to Ph.D." School and Society, 76:225-231, October 11, 1952.

If the past can be used as a sound criteria for predicting the future, increased enrollments and graduation can be expected at all educational levels.

Some Major School Problems

As a result of the vast numbers of youth enrolling in the educational institutions today, school systems are beset by a multiplicity of problems. Some they have been able to solve, others still loom in the background waiting to be solved.

Although \$500 million more tax money was channeled into school budgets in 1953-54 than during the previous year, money matters still appear at the top of important agenda items. Over \$7.2 billion was spent during 1953-54 for the operation and building of school plants. Despite the addition of 50,000 new classrooms, three out of every five are still overcrowded. One out of five is considered unsafe from the fire hazard viewpoint. In addition to upgrading the nation's school plants, salaries of teachers were raised from an average \$3240 to \$3400.¹

Money is not the only problem facing schools. There is a failure to recognize scholastic competency, too many unprovoked and demoralizing verbal attacks on schools, and, of course, the ever-present teacher shortage. One cryptic observer noted, "Improved conditions will do much to make teaching a profession and not a procession."²

¹Hunt, Herold D. "Major Problems of the Schools." The Educational Record, 35:12-17, January, 1954.

²Loc. cit.

Can money alone improve the schools? C. Arnold Anderson and Mary Jean Bowman think not. Their reply is,

It is not doubted that adequate financial support is a prerequisite of an efficient school system. However, an analysis of the relationship of the 16- and 17-year olds enrolled in the public school to the amounts of money spent on education casts doubts on the common assumption that the more money spent, the better the school.

In Kansas in 1954 between .7 and .8 per cent more was spent on public schools than during the previous year. At the same time there was a 3.5 per cent increase in enrollment. In the United States the school income increased between .8 and .9 per cent with an enrollment increase of approximately 5.75 per cent. The financial effect was evidenced most strongly in the South. There the states which made the greatest advances in school finance also tended to have the greatest gains in enrollment. No broad statements can be made on the subject, however; each state is a special case.²

Selective Service Rejectees

Much of the strength of any nation lies in the health and trained intelligence of its citizens. Each is closely integrated with the other, and both depend to a great extent on the amount and type of training given in the schools.

"One of the most challenging problems of our times is a

¹Anderson, C. Arnold, and Mary Jean Bowman. "Can Money Alone Improve the Schools?" The School Executive, 74:82-84, March, 1955.

²Loc. cit.

problem involving the physical, mental, and moral fitness of the youth of the nation, upon whose shoulders must rest the future of the country and its chances of survival. . .," declared Major General John B. Hershey.¹

Selective service officials found disturbing evidence that the "physical, mental, and moral fitness of the youth of the nation" left a great deal to be desired. The state with the best record of the 48 and territories was forced to reject two out of every ten because they were unable to meet minimum physical qualifications for military service, or could not pass a simple test of literacy and intellectual development. The state with the worst record failed six out of ten, and 13 states failed 40 per cent or more of their draftees.²

The astounding rejection rate is shown in selected data from the pre-induction rejection rate from July, 1950, to April, 1952:³

U. S. and territories	37.4%
U. S. (continental)	36.3%
Puerto Rico	63.0% (highest rejection)
South Carolina	63.3% (second highest)
Kansas	20.7% (53rd - fourth lowest)
North Dakota	20.7% (54th - third lowest)
Minnesota	20.3% (55th - second lowest)
Canal Zone	10.1% (56th - lowest rejection)

Altho Kansas had the fourth lowest rate in the number of rejection, there is little cause for boasting when two out of every five are rejected. One wonders: Is the Kansas educational

¹McGrath, Earl James. "Selective Service Rejectees--A Challenge to Our Schools." School Life, 35:35-6, December, 1952.

²Loc. cit.

³Loc. cit.

program equipping Kansas youth to meet effectively the demands placed upon them?

Holding Power

Since the selective service rejectees mentioned in the previous section dealt solely with the male portion of the population, it might be well to consider at least one study which pertained mainly to adjustment and maladjustment of boys.

In Prince George's County, Maryland, ratings by teachers showed there were four times as many maladjusted boys as girls. Based on observable behavior, approximately eight out of 100 had serious problems in adjusting to normal living. However, the study found that boys worried less and had fewer headaches than the girls. Recommendations were to identify the maladjusted early and give them assistance.¹ Perhaps this would help reduce the rejectee rate.

Even the beginning teacher soon learns that maladjustment can seriously lower the holding power of a school. But, "maladjustment" wears many faces; it is made up of many diverse symptoms. Why do 45 per cent of those who enter the fifth grade fail to graduate from high school?² Every researcher arrives at his own list of reasons, yet many of the same reasons appear over and over on different lists.

¹"More Maladjusted Boys Found Than Girls, in High School Survey." The Personnel and Guidance Journal. 31:130, November, 1952.

²Hunt, loc. cit.

For instance, Hunt lists hidden costs, failure to find valuable courses, unsympathetic teachers, lack of home encouragement, and the competition of gainful employment as hindrances to the holding power of a school. He went further in noting that high school is terminal education for 82 per cent of a senior class.¹

A survey in Austin, Minnesota, studied the holding power of a six-year high school enrolling about 2200 pupils. Results indicated: 1. Stay-in power is slightly better when the pupil enters at grade seven. 2. Those in grade nine tend to drop out during the year they enter. 3. Though more pupils of lesser scholastic ability are remaining to graduate, IQs are factors affecting holding power. 4. There appears to be a connection between poor reading ability and the tendency to drop out. 5. The poor attender is more apt to drop out than one with a satisfactory attendance record. 6. Participation in extra-class activities is influential in holding pupils in high school. 7. Financial condition does not appear to be a chief factor. 8. Youths withdrawing frequently come from homes of unskilled workers and farmers.²

Generalizations in regard to holding power were drawn from a study made by Gaumnitz and Tompkins. They concluded that 1. States with separate schools for minority groups show low holding power. 2. No superiority in holding power of larger

¹Loc. cit.

²"Who Are Most Likely to Drop Out of High School?" School Science and Mathematics, 54:135, March, 1954.

over smaller high schools is discernible; and 3. ". . .attempts to aid and encourage young people in high school are likely to be successful in the degree to which they take into account the beliefs and wishes of everyone in the community."¹

Identifying Drop-Outs

Studies of early school leavers have shown that certain symptoms appear repeatedly and are helpful in identifying potential drop-outs.

The Canadian Research Committee, in their "Two Years After School" report released in 1951 listed the following symptoms:

1. Retardation or repetition of grades.
 2. General ability in lowest fifth of class.
 3. Non-participation in recreation.
 4. No part-time jobs.
 4. Economic status of family in lower fifth.
- Other factors of less importance were:
1. Size of community, if less than 10,000.
 2. Father's occupation--semi-skilled, unskilled, or farmers.
 3. No hobby.²

Dillon in "Early School Leavers" listed seven symptoms of vulnerability: fairly consistent regression in scholarship from elementary to junior to senior high school, frequent grade failures of grade or subject failure in the junior and senior high school, marked regression in attendance from elementary to junior to senior high school, frequent transfers from one school to

¹"How Common Is High School Graduation?" The School Review, 59:193-4, April, 1951.

²"Early School Leavers." The School Review, 59:511-15, December, 1951.

another, evidence of a feeling of insecurity or "lack of belonging" in school, and a marked lack of interest in school work.¹

Contrary to lay supposition, however, Dillon found that

To the extent that the presence of both parents in the home contributes to the stability of that home, it may be assumed that the majority of school leavers studied lived in a home atmosphere where this stability factor was present.²

A longer list of symptoms was presented by a group who participated in the Work Conference on Life Adjustment Education in 1950. They are given from an educator's viewpoint: 1. Personal data on cumulative record cards indicative of potential maladjustment. 2. Intermittent and irregular absence and excessive tardiness. 3. Poor reading ability. 4. Physical and health problems. 5. Repeated tendency toward failure in formal school experiences. 6. Lack of active participation in school activities. 7. Parental indifference. 8. Significant data relating to family tensions. 9. Lack of personal sense of belonging. 10. Financial problems. 11. Inability to get along with school associates. 12. Dislike for certain subjects. 13. Excessive interest in gainful work outside of school. 14. Unusual behavior patterns, e.g. extreme introvert or extrovert tendencies. 15. Lack of proper teacher-pupil relationship. 16. Emotional instability. 17. Boredom and restlessness.³

¹Office of Education. Op. cit. p. 14.

²Dillon, Harold J. Early School Leavers, a Major Educational Problem. New York: National Child Labor Committee, 1949. p. 22.

³Office of Education. Op. cit. p. 46.

The School's Part in Drop-Outs

In a Class AA high school in Kansas in November, 1951, Isaacs and Anderson of the University of Kansas chose 27 sophomores, 19 juniors, and 18 seniors who were drop-outs. A like number were selected at random of stay-ins in the same classes. They found that the mean IQ of the stay-ins was 105, while that of the drop-outs was 95. The stay-ins showed consistent patterns of superiority on teachers' appraisals. These data led them to recommend a rating sheet as one method of identifying potential leavers in junior high.¹

The traditional, unrealistic curricula offered in many high schools is an important factor in the drop-out rate. "Many schools are falling down because their courses are out of step with the times," thinks Frank Kalser, Connecticut educator. Most pupils take a college preparatory course, but 30 per cent of them will never go to college. Actually, only three per cent of the 21,000 occupations are professions.²

Subject Enrollment Trends

About the pupil's only method of defense against the traditional, unrealistic curriculum (unless he quits) is not to enroll in courses which do not meet his needs. From 1934-1949

¹"High School Drop-Outs and Stay-Ins." The School Review, 60:255-6, May, 1952.

²Pollack, Jack Harrison. "What Happens when Kids Quit School?" Parents' Magazine, 27:44-5, August, 1952.

the percentages of total pupil bodies decreased in mathematics and foreign languages, remained about the same in the arts and business education, and increased in all others. The largest enrollments were in health, safety, physical education, English, and social studies, all of which are usually required.¹

The largest increases appeared in the home economics and industrial arts courses. A few increased at the expense of others: biology over zoology and botany, general science over specific sciences, and general mathematics over algebra and geometry.²

Greatest percentage increases were evidenced in physical education, typing, general mathematics and arithmetic, United States history, and Spanish. Latin and French showed the greatest percentage decreases.³

Percentage enrollment shows progressive decreases since 1915 in algebra, geometry, physics, and Latin. Courses which are rapidly disappearing from the curriculum include English history, industrial history, nature study, novel (as such), short story (as such), Greek, and teacher training. New courses which are now being offered in at least 15 states are conservation, consumer buying, safety education, driver education, home management, fundamentals of electricity, remedial English, mathematics review, radio speaking and broadcasting, vocational

¹Hull, Dan J. "Trends in High School Subject Enrollments." School Life, 34:7, 14, October, 1951.

²Loc. cit.

³Loc. cit.

radio, diversified occupations, cooperative store training, cooperative office training, service art, and student service.¹

Further data indicated about two per cent of all public secondary day school pupils were enrolled in single-period orientation or social living courses. There were about the same number in single-period courses in group guidance, personal problems, human relations, and social adjustment. Also, four per cent of all public secondary school pupils were enrolled in core courses. These were offered in 15 per cent of all junior high schools.²

Altho general agreement is developing with regard to curriculum principles and theory, there is a considerable lag between curriculum principles and their application. This was evident in the foregoing data. This lag is believed to be responsible for a large proportion of early school leavers.³

Reasons for Leaving

If the pupil does not solve his differences with the school, or his other problems, then he will likely give up and become a drop-out.

Many did not know the fundamental reasons for their leaving. Others gave excuses rather than causes. Altho there was an element of truth in the statements made as to why they left school, there was some doubt in the minds of researchers about

¹Loc. cit.

²Loc. cit.

³Office of Education. Op. cit. p. 41.

taking the statements at their face value. Furthermore, there was evidence that more serious and fundamental conditions were basic, often regardless of the reasons given. Generally a large proportion were unable to do more than to express a lack of interest in school or a hatred for it. The preponderance of reasons emphasized dissatisfaction with some aspect of school life. The reasons which students gave for remaining in school had little comparative value except to indicate that students who remained in school seemingly were well-suited to the existing program and the existing school atmosphere.¹

In 1950 a survey in the Pine Hill High School, Buffalo, New York, showed only 59 per cent of the pupils were being retained. The decision was made to survey the graduates and non-graduates of the 1946-50 classes. By personal interviews an attempt was made to determine why pupils left, ways they could be encouraged to remain, and ways in which the school could be improved.²

Results pointed out that size of family, employment of parents, and the educational background of parents were of little importance. Pupils residing in the district, living within walking distance of the school, participating in extra-class activities, and not having outside employment were those most apt to graduate. There appeared to be little significance

¹Ibid. p. 17.

²Johnson, Lowell M. "What Are the Major Causes of Student Drop-Outs and What Should the School Do About the Present Condition?" NASSP Bulletin, 39:84-8, April, 1955.

in intelligence between the graduates and the non-graduates. Causes of drop-outs seemed to center in four areas--lack of guidance, lack of parent interest, lack of interest in school, and a narrow course of study.¹

Recommendations of the Pine Hill group for increasing the school's holding power were to increase the guidance facilities, offer subjects which were more realistic, increase elective offerings, and promote a better public relations program. Action taken on the recommendations resulted in supervised study during a portion of each class period, an increase in the practical aspects of courses thru trips, use of community resources, etc. More practical electives such as auto mechanics and metal shop were added, an activity period was added to aid the bus-riders, a guidance program including home visits was established, a cooperative work program was set up, and an extensive program of adult education was launched.²

Was the survey worthwhile? Was the action effective? The holding power rose from 59 per cent in 1950 to 90 per cent in 1951!³

One more study relating to drop-outs and stay-ins may be of interest. This may give some new sidelights to the problem, since it was conducted in a New England manufacturing city. One hundred pupils who had dropped out of the Drury High School of North Adams, Massachusetts, between June, 1948, and May, 1952,

¹Loc. cit.

²Loc. cit.

³Loc. cit.

were interviewed. The lure of the manufacturing plant was evidenced in the fact that 33 per cent said they dropped out of school because they wanted to work. An additional 30 per cent stated they disliked school, 21 per cent said their families needed help, 16 per cent were dissatisfied because of their inability to get the curriculum they wanted, and 11 per cent were discouraged by failure and low marks. Lesser percentages were given: seven per cent because of death of parent, seven per cent could see no value in school, seven per cent disliked teacher(s), seven per cent were not interested in school, seven per cent had serious illness in family, and seven per cent were unhappy, nervous, shy, and felt out of place. Twenty-five additional reasons were recorded six per cent to one per cent.¹

At the same time the non-graduates were being studied, the group wanted to learn why others were remaining until graduated. Two hundred seniors in September, 1952, and 100 graduates in the class of 1952 gave the following reasons for staying in school: 63.3 per cent thought a diploma necessary for getting a good job and getting ahead in life, 44.3 per cent liked their friends and associations, 40.3 per cent liked and enjoyed school, 40 per cent liked their subjects and courses, 38.3 per cent were influenced by both parents, 38 per cent liked the activities, 36.4 per cent took education for granted and had never thought of dropping out, 32 per cent were preparing for college, 19.6 per cent enjoyed athletics, sports, and games, 18.3 per cent

¹Loc. cit.

desired to increase their knowledge and to learn, 15.3 per cent liked their teachers, 14.7 per cent were preparing for jobs, 13.7 per cent were influenced by their mothers, 12.3 per cent were preparing for further education in business, technical, art, aviation, and apprentice schools, 12.3 per cent were preparing to enter military service, 11.7 per cent were influenced by relatives and friends to stay, nine per cent were preparing for nurse's training, six per cent had a good time, 5.3 per cent wanted to get all the schooling possible because they had only work ahead, and 4.7 per cent were influenced by the guidance officers and teachers.¹ Apparently, there is as great a multiplicity of reasons for staying in as for dropping out.

The multiplicity which keeps some pupils in school may cause others to drop out. The drop-out may be frustrated by the multiplicity of courses and may not be able to get counseling. The need is great for more appraisal and better counseling.

The Massachusetts Office of Education asked the state's school administrators, "To what extent are you making a study of school leavers?" Replies showed 120 were doing it by guidance, 42 were improving curriculum, 41 made program adjustments, and 23 simply answered, "Yes," without being specific. Eleven offered trade schools, nine were allowed part-time jobs to be maintained, eight said not enough can be done, and seven were increasing social activities and sports. Negative answers

¹Loc. cit.

were given by only seven of the administrators.¹

As a result of the efforts being made, the goal of lower drop-out rates was being achieved in Massachusetts. In 1951-52 drop-outs totaled a low five per cent. There were more boy leavers than girl leavers, and the most frequent grade of leaving was grade 10. Reasons given for leaving were not unique--preferred work to school, not interested in school, needed money at home, wanted spending money, failing in school work, could not learn in school, disliked a certain subject, disliked a certain teacher, friends had left, could learn more outside of school, ill health, and parents wanted pupil to leave.²

After reading a number of surveys on drop-outs' reasons for leaving school, one is forced to conclude that the causes are nearly universal. Percentages may vary somewhat from region to region, or town to town, but the same reasons appear over and over. There is little or no variety in the answers.

IQ and Drop-Outs

There appeared to be some disagreement among researchers in the matter of relationship of IQ to drop-outs and stay-ins. In the Kansas study mentioned on page 16 of this work, there appeared to be a difference of 10 points on the mean IQs of drop-outs and stay-ins. Stay-ins were listed as 105 and drop-outs as 95. However, the sample was small and was picked at

¹Mack, A. Russell. "A Study of Drop-Outs." MASSP Bulletin, 33:49-51, February, 1954.

²Loc. cit.

random. Small sampling and coincidence might account for the differences.

The Austin, Minnesota, study (p. 13) indicated that "IQs are factors affecting holding power," and the Canadian Research Committee (p. 14) pointed out that the drop-out's general ability was apt to be in the lower fifth of the class. Contrarily, the Pine Hill survey (p. 19) observed that "there appeared to be little significance in intelligence between the graduates and the non-graduates."

H. S. Smith, a school man from Atlanta, Georgia, has the following to say about the study results in his city: "Of all the areas of differences studied, the greatest difference between the withdrawals and non-withdrawals was found in the area of measured intelligence." He further noted that most Atlanta failures were in the English and industrial arts courses.¹

The eighth, ninth, and tenth grade withdrawals in Atlanta were characterized by grade retardation, poor academic records, little activity participation, and vague reasons for withdrawing. The 11th and 12th grade withdrawals had few or no characteristics to distinguish them from the non-withdrawals and most were able to give specific rather than vague reasons for leaving. The best solution or aid for the Atlanta system in general would seem to be to let class work be carried out, not on one level, but on as many levels as needed.²

¹Cook, Edward S. Jr. "How It Figures in the Drop-Out Problem." The School Executive, 74:56-7, September, 1954.

²Loc. cit.

Comparative IQs of Atlanta withdrawals and non-withdrawals were as follows:

	<u>Withdrawals</u>	<u>Non- Withdrawals</u>	<u>Points Difference</u>
Total mental factors	85.19	93.85	8.66
Language IQ	82.81	94.57	11.76
Non-language IQ	86.51	92.68	6.17

The above data are based on the scores of 64 withdrawals and 200 non-withdrawals on the California Test of Mental Maturity. All differences are significant at the .01 level.¹

One further comment relative to IQs and drop-outs might be made. David Segel of the United States Office of Education points up one other phase, "Studies made of parents suggest that children who have been brought up in a democratic home do much better socially in school. Not only that, but if they are reared democratically, their IQ goes up about 10 per cent."²

Racial Group Drop-Out Studies

Often the drop-out's leaving school is easily traceable to a racial background which is not positively inclined toward education.

In Newark, New Jersey, school officials were amazed when a study revealed their smallest drop-out percentage was in a rigid academic high school and the largest was in a school offering a large variety of academic and vocational courses, homogenous grouping, etc. Community traditions and attitudes

¹Loc. cit.

²Office of Education, op. cit. p. 34.

seemed to be the only basis for the difference in drop-out percentages. Communities made up in large part of first generation Americans, foreigners, or minority groups often have not accepted the tradition of at least a high school education for their youngsters.¹

The lack of educational traditions of a community group were evidenced in a Tucson, Arizona, study of 54 pupils who dropped out between junior and senior high school. The majority of the interviewees were girls, two years over-age for their class, products of a broken home in which the breadwinner was a laborer, and retarded readers. Financial difficulties predominated their lives, they had a low academic aptitude, and most of them lived in the cultural atmosphere of the Spanish-American "Old World" community. In this case the causes behind drop-outs were of such a nature that the school could do little to eliminate or alleviate them.²

A curriculum study in 1941-42 revealed that the drop-out problem in the Negro schools in Maryland was even more acute than in the entire nation. The survey undertaken included any drop-out between the first and 12th grades. Of the 433 listed by the cooperating schools, only 320 could be located, interviewed, and analyzed.³

¹Loc. cit.

²Young, Joe M. "Lost, Strayed, or Stolen." The Clearing House, 29:89-92, October, 1954.

³Moore, Parlett L. "Factors Determining Elimination in the Negro Secondary School." NAESP Bulletin, 38:42-3, Feb., 1954.

In the course of the analysis, a wide discrepancy was shown between the reasons for withdrawal as shown by school records and those given by the individuals in the interviews. The school records showed the following reasons:

1. Over compulsory attendance age
2. Fourteen years of age in high school, indifferent, unable to do work
3. Physical incapacity

Reasons given during interviews were:

1. Pregnancy (20.9%)
2. Work to support self or family (16.6%)
3. Number of factors

The surveyors then took the answers from both sources and grouped the reasons into six categories:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Home environment | 34.4% |
| 2. Parenthood (girls and boys) | 20.9% |
| 3. Pupil maturity | 18.1% |
| 4. Curriculum | 17.5% |
| 5. Mass pressures | 5.3% |
| 6. Personal illness | 3.8% |

They also found that two out of three drop-outs came from homes of low economic status and had poor home social behavior. Conclusions were similar to those in the Arizona and New Jersey studies: "The most prevalent reasons for elimination in the Negro schools of Maryland are of such a nature that the school can contribute only indirectly to their removal."¹

After Youth Quit

What happens to the drop-out after he makes the break with

¹Loc. cit.

high school and finds himself competing for a job in the employment market?

Harold J. Coon of Syracuse, New York, says,

We have discovered that the pattern which existed in school is the same pattern which exists in their work situations . . . We found that boys and girls left school because they could not get along with the principal or with the teachers. We also found that some of them have had five, six, or seven jobs since leaving school, and one of the reasons given was that they could not get along with the boss. We found that another reason why they left school was because they had been unable to arrange their programs of work so that they could take four subjects in a row and then have the rest of the day free. We found another reason they left their jobs was because the hours were too long. We found that one of the reasons they left school was their dislike for the work which was offered in school; we found that one of the reasons they left the job was that they did not like the work in which they found themselves engaged. We found that they left school because they were not getting enough out of it for themselves, and we found that they left their jobs because the wages were not high enough.¹

What an illuminating commentary on drop-outs and their jobs!

Current data are not available, but the number of 16- and 17-year olds in non-agricultural full-time and part-time employment increased 31.3 per cent from March, 1950, to March, 1951. The increase was probably caused by the war and availability of more jobs. During this period the increase in school-leaving was most marked among boys, although girls were not absent from the picture.² In 1952 a total of 2,344,000 youth between the ages of 14 and 17 were working full- or part-time.³

There is less job security for the drop-out than for the

¹Office of Education, op. cit. p. 19

²"High School Drop-Outs and Stay-Ins," loc. cit.

³Pollack, loc. cit.

graduate. In Louisville, Kentucky, the 524 drop-outs surveyed showed:¹

1/5 of the 18- and 19-year olds were unemployed
 1/3 of the 16- and 17-year olds were unemployed
 1/2 of the 14- and 15-year olds were unemployed

The number of employed youth in the United States is increasing. Whereas in 1940 only one out of 25 youth was employed, in 1951 one out of every four United States students held a part-time job.²

Job stability is not the only problem facing the drop-out. He also has to cope with a smaller earning power, and, as a matter of consequence, a smaller income. According to Pollack, of those who earn \$5000 or more annually, only 11 per cent have just a grade school education. Most of those who earn only \$1500-\$2000 a year have only an eighth grade education.³

Region and race are other factors which enter into the income received by an individual. The inter-relationship of region, race, and schooling completed are best illustrated by Table 1 on the following page.⁴

Any pupil who questions the monetary value of remaining in school has only to look at the foregoing data to realize that in the majority of cases, the monetary return is in direct proportion to the individual's years of schooling.

¹Loc. cit.

²Loc. cit.

³Loc. cit.

⁴Anderson, C. Arnold. "Regional and Racial Differences in Relations Between Income and Education." The School Review, 63:38-45, January, 1955.

Table 1. Cumulative 1949 income distributions by schooling completed, males, aged 45-54 years

Region, : Race, : Schooling: Completed:		<u>Per Cent with Income Equal to or Exceeding</u>										
		500:1000:1500:2000:2500:3000:4000:5000:6000:7000:10,000										
<u>Grades 1-4</u>												
North, West												
White		87.4	79.0	70.6	61.6	48.0	35.0	14.2	6.6	3.6	2.4	1.0
Nonwhite		84.1	71.7	61.6	48.2	28.2	15.0	2.8	.7	.2	.1	-
South												
White		76.5	57.6	42.7	30.6	19.4	13.1	5.1	2.6	1.7	1.3	.7
Nonwhite		71.2	47.6	30.3	15.6	6.1	2.7	.8	.4	.3	.2	.1
<u>Grade 8</u>												
North, West												
White		92.9	87.8	81.6	74.2	62.3	49.6	23.3	11.1	5.7	3.6	1.6
Nonwhite		87.6	81.7	72.9	59.5	39.4	20.7	3.8	2.0	.7	.5	.3
South												
White		88.3	78.4	68.4	57.9	44.8	34.5	16.1	8.1	4.3	2.7	1.3
Nonwhite		82.2	64.0	48.3	31.0	13.1	5.9	.9	.4	.2	.2	.2
<u>Grade 12</u>												
North, West												
White		94.4	91.8	88.6	84.1	76.6	67.7	42.0	25.5	15.4	10.6	5.6
Nonwhite		88.7	82.3	75.9	67.0	47.3	31.9	8.2	2.6	1.0	.6	.1
South												
White		93.3	89.8	85.2	79.6	70.5	62.0	39.5	25.2	16.3	11.2	6.0
Nonwhite		88.6	77.3	62.5	42.6	24.2	13.4	3.1	1.1	.3	.3	.3
<u>Grade 16 or higher</u>												
North, West												
White		96.0	94.3	92.1	90.0	86.8	83.0	70.2	57.2	43.9	35.2	21.8
Nonwhite		94.9	89.7	85.5	79.5	65.4	56.9	28.2	15.4	10.7	6.4	5.1
South												
White		96.6	94.7	92.9	90.8	87.3	83.1	68.8	55.3	43.8	34.9	19.5
Nonwhite		90.9	86.9	75.1	66.0	52.9	43.4	28.6	15.9	8.6	5.4	2.7

Reducing Drop-Outs

Is it desirable to keep in school 100 per cent of the pupils?

A study made in San Diego a few years ago by Dr. Hazeltine, one

of the San Diego principals, showed that

Forty per cent of the 1,000 drop-outs studied were successful at the time of the interviews. Success was determined by using as criteria health, wholesome recreation, marital happiness, vocational security, and personal satisfaction.¹

Attendance at school is not a foolproof method of achieving an educated populace. Edward H. Redford, coordinator of secondary schools in San Francisco, points to another facet of the situation. He says,

We have a compulsory school law in California. Whereas we may keep youngsters in school longer as a result of this law, we have the added problem of finding out what to do with them . . . The problem is not only of keeping them in school but also of doing something with them that is worthwhile when we do keep them in school.²

It would appear, then, that education requires more than the enactment of a piece of legislation.

Of those who cannot be considered "successful" after dropping out, an even greater need for education arises. Accepting the fact that a certain minute portion of the population is uneducable thru heredity or choice, what can be done to assist those who can profit from a high school education?

A study of 1300 drop-outs in Jackson County and Lansing, Michigan, Cleveland, and Cincinnati revealed that one-half of them were sorry they had quit, after being out merely a year.³

Some cities have arrived at workable programs for such pupils. Very briefly, their programs are as follows:

¹Office of Education. Op. cit. p. 31.

²Ibid. p. 24.

³Pollack, loc. cit.

1. Milwaukee--Pupils must attend school until they are 18 years old, unless graduated or married. If they are working, they are required to attend only one day per week. Full-time attendance is required if the youth is jobless. Counseling is also given the youth.
2. Detroit--16-21-year old unemployed drop-outs may voluntarily learn how to obtain and succeed in their jobs thru job up-grading courses. These are arranged so even full-time workers may take advantage of them.
3. Philadelphia--The Philadelphians have put teeth into their child labor and school attendance laws, while also building an effective school-work program.
4. Richmond--Thru efforts of the Virginia club women, the child labor laws were revised in 1948 and are now one of the best codes in the United States.
5. Roanoke--Drop-outs are reported three times a year. The Director of Adult Education writes a friendly letter to each drop-out, offering to help. Very often the offer is accepted, and the youth is helped to find and keep a suitable job.
6. Youngstown--Youth must attend school until 18 unless graduated or employed. Drop-outs are referred to the state employment service office where counseling is given before name is removed from the school rolls.
7. St. Louis--The Red Cross works with a local foundation which gives scholarships to help with a student's finances. A vocational counseling service is also provided.
8. Others--New York City-Provides cooperative education classes where pupils learn and earn. East Hampton, Connecticut-Work experience is given seniors. As a result 97 per cent remain in their home town. Allentown, Pennsylvania-Vocational courses from shoemaking to paperhanging are provided.¹

Many fine services are being offered the young people of school age, particularly those in cities. But, no matter how

¹Loc. cit.

good the services for these young people may be, they help only those they reach. More need to be reached.

The job cannot be handled by educators alone. Parents need to help, too. In Minneapolis the Parent-Teacher Association contacts drop-outs during the first few weeks of school, so they can return and get caught up if they wish. Also, they sponsor back-to-school campaigns.¹

Two procedures are necessary if the United States is ever to achieve universal education. First, a program must be carried out that meets the needs of both the society and the individual. Secondly, services must be provided to identify and treat those who cannot accept such procedures, so they can be adjusted in the school program or guided to more fruitful situations.²

McGee suggests some changes that might increase holding power:

1. Adopt a philosophy that school has an obligation to try to keep each youth in school thru graduation or thru age 18.
2. Modify the curriculum and groupings to meet the needs of slow learners.
3. Add several practical electives in business education, industrial arts, and homemaking.
4. Increase guidance services and make them available the year around.
5. Since discouragement is one of the chief factors in withdrawal, it might be wise to let pupils carry a heavier schedule in grades nine and ten, then lighter ones in 11 and 12.
6. Hold individual conferences with potentially failing students before they fail

¹"High School Drop-Outs and Stay-Ins," loc. cit.

²Loc. cit.

a course, not afterward.¹

One more thing needs to be added to the list of those things which would improve the holding power of the high school--the personal element. Many drop-outs feel that no one cares if he is there or not. Some have said that if only one teacher had cared, they would have stayed. If the pressure of overcrowded classrooms and overloaded teachers could somehow be relieved, then perhaps more teachers would find the time to take a greater personal interest in the problems that perplex their students.

The United States Office of Education lists 27 measures to cut down the number of drop-outs in the United States. All are based on three factors: 1. An adequate guidance and testing program. 2. Ability grouping. 3. Building of a curriculum that meets the needs of youth.²

The task of each school is to conduct a study of its drop-outs, find out why they withdrew, and try to determine how the school could have better helped them. Then, the school should make the general changes indicated, and, as a final step, make continuous revisions in the curriculum and program and make other provisions for the needs of youth.

¹McGee, George A. "We Increased Our Holding Power." NEA Journal, 42:482, November, 1953.

²Shibler, loc. cit.

THE LA CROSSE RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDY

Methods and Materials

School-Community Background. The La Crosse Rural High School is located in a central Kansas town which has a population of about 1700. Most of the people are engaged in agricultural or related occupations. The only industry is a small subsidiary manufacturing plant which makes precision parts for Boeing planes.

A strong Catholic element is present in the town, as well as in all of Rush County. A parochial elementary school located in La Crosse serves approximately 100 Catholic children. Attendance in the single public elementary school in La Crosse is around 225.

Within Rush County are located five high schools: Alexander, Bison, La Crosse, McCracken, and Otis. Enrollment in the Alexander, Bison, and McCracken schools is well under the 50-pupil mark. The Otis enrollment, which is climbing each year, is currently around 90 to 100. Between 180 and 190 have registered annually at the four-year La Crosse high school the past few years; this school serves secondary pupils from the Liebenthal, Rush Center, and Timken communities, in addition to those in La Crosse.

The faculty of 12, consisting of 11 instructors and the principal, have been handicapped for a number of years by an out-moded and severely-inadequate school plant. The school program has been weakened by the following school plant deficiencies: 1. Overcrowded, drab classrooms with a shortage of space

for equipment and storage. 2. Library and shop facilities in separate buildings not connected with the main building. 3. Gym and stage facilities located in the City Auditorium, three blocks away from main building. 4. Athletic field located on opposite side of town from rest of school plant.

Various other problems encountered by the school staff are:

1. Limited community interest in school activities and problems.
2. Obsolete equipment in classrooms.
3. Insufficient subsidization of certain extra-class activities.
4. Lack of balance of class and activity loads for some teachers.
5. Inequalities of pay between men and women with similar education, experience, and work loads.
6. Reluctance of school board to reimburse individuals for expenses incurred for school.
7. Administrator must divide his time between administrative and instrumental music duties, each of which is a full-time job.
8. A generally low salary scale.

A building program is now underway which should alleviate many of the limitations listed above. With more classrooms available, perhaps the school board will find it advisable to increase the teaching staff and enrich the school's program.

Incentive for the Study. The author, after being a La Crosse high school instructor for four years, felt there was too large a number of drop-outs each year. Knowing some of the capabilities and problems of the later group of withdrawals, she was interested in finding answers to the questions: Why are these pupils withdrawing before graduating? What's at fault? The faculty? The school plant? The curriculum? The entire school

program? The family? Finances? Lack of counseling? What's wrong?

This thesis attempts to provide a few answers to these questions.

Information from School Records. A list of drop-outs was secured from the 1940 to 1955 school records; the original list totaled 185. Other data from the records were name and address of parent or guardian, IQ scores, year of withdrawal, number of days attended (later proved unusable because of incompleteness of records), and grade-level class at time of withdrawal. Current addresses were secured from friends and relatives. (It will be noted that this study covers a greater number of classes than the four recommended by the Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program.¹ However, it does delve into those same major characteristics studied by the Illinois Program--socio-economic status, retardation, intelligence, achievement, and interest in school work.)

Method of Contact. The first contact was made by mail. A duplicated, original-signature letter to the drop-out (see appendix), a questionnaire for students withdrawing before finishing high school (appendix), and a self-addressed, stamped envelope were mailed to each drop-out. This was followed by an advertisement in the Rush County News which read:

¹Allen, Charles M. How to Conduct the Holding Power Study. Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program Bulletin No. 3, 1949. pp. 3, 9.

Will all former L. H. S. students
 who received
 Q U E S T I O N N A I R E S
 from me
 please return them at once
 D O R A L E E D A U M A
 202 East 8th Street
 Scott City, Kansas

Next, a current graduate of the school attempted to help the author by writing personal appeals to those she knew, asking that they cooperate by returning their questionnaires. These attempts netted 19 mail responses.

Then, the author contacted all those who were reachable in Rush and adjoining counties. These personal interviews gained 33 more responses, bringing the total responses to 52. During the interviews some wrote the answers themselves, and some were written by the interviewer. This was at the discretion of the interviewee. There were 30.2 per cent who responded to the survey. This was a satisfactory percentage in view of the number of years covered by the survey and the fact that many of the boys were in the armed forces and could not be reached by interviewing and would not respond by mail. Those boys who did respond tended to give more complete answers than the girls.

Table 2. Response from original list of 185 drop-outs.

	Boys(24)	Frequency Girls(23)	Both
Response			
By mail	10	9	19
By interview	14	19	33
Total response	24	28	52
No response			
Uncooperative	7	2	9
Unlocatable	64	47	111
Total no response	71	49	120
Graduated			10
Deceased			3

This 30.2 per cent response is somewhat lower than the 42 per cent who responded to the Syracuse, New York, study;¹ but it must be remembered that the Syracuse study covered drop-outs from seven semesters, whereas this study covered those from 30 semesters. With the mobility of the population during the past 15 years, it is often difficult to locate drop-outs of a number of years ago.

Had this study been limited only to the last five years (ten semesters), the response would approximate that of the Syracuse study and that of Bowman's study in Manhattan, Kansas, where a 45 per cent return was noted.² From the La Crosse drop-outs between 1950-1955 a total of 19 of the 47 responded, a

¹Smith, Harry P. Syracuse Youth Who Did Not Graduate. Board of Education, Syracuse, New York, 1950. p. 12.

²Bowman, Benjamin P. Jr. A Study of the Holding Power of the Junior and Senior High School of Manhattan, Kansas. Unpublished Master's thesis, Kansas State College, Manhattan, Kansas, 1952. p. 19.

percentage of 41.9 per cent. This is considerably higher than the 15-year percentage of 30.2 per cent.

Enrollments and Drop-outs. Over the course of the 15 years covered in the survey (1940-1955), an average six per cent of the enrollees withdrew each year. This was considerably below the national 40-plus percentages referred to at the beginning of this thesis. Of the 172 drop-outs in La Crosse, 55 per cent were boys and 45 per cent were girls.

Table 3. Total enrollments and total drop-outs by school years.

School year	Boy : drop-outs	Girl : drop-outs	Total : drop-outs	Total : enroll- ed	Per cent total : enrolled that : dropped out
40-41	6	1	7	221	3.2%
41-42	6	3	9	233	4.3%
42-43	6	7	13	192	6.8%
43-44	10	6	16	206	7.8%
44-45	12	5	17	181	9.4%
45-46	5	9	14	182	7.7%
46-47	7	3	10	190	5.3%
47-48	7	10	17	203	8.4%
48-49	6	3	9	200	4.5%
49-50	6	7	13	191	6.8%
50-51	8	2	10	187	5.4%
51-52	6	4	10	170	5.9%
52-53	4	3	7	186	3.8%
53-54	1	9	10	185	5.4%
54-55	5	5	10	189	5.3%
Totals	95	77	172		

Personal Factors. IQ. As previously noted, the IQ of the drop-out may or may not be related to his withdrawal from high school. Since the testing program in the La Crosse high school had been somewhat erratic and too late in the year to catch early drop-outs, the data were too inadequate to be conclusive. In

general the tests used have been mainly the California Test of Mental Maturity and the Otis Quick-Scoring Test. (In more recent years some vocational aptitude and interest tests have also been given. Not much use has been made of the results, however.) On the basis of known data, one can assume that most of the La Crosse drop-outs could have successfully completed high school had other factors been favorable. The median IQ score was 95-96.

Table 4. Intelligence quotients of drop-outs

	Boys (27)	:	Girls (36)
			120
			114
			107
			105
	103		102
	104		102
	104		100
	103		100
	102		100
	100		100
	100		99
	99		98
	98		98
	98		97
	98		97
	97		97
	97		96
median	95		96
	93		96
	90		94
	90		93
	89		92
	86		92
	84		91
	80		90
	79		90
	77		88
	77		88
	71		87

Table 4 (concl.)

Boys (27)	:	Girls (36)
70		84
67		82
		81
		81
		78
		74
		72

One thing should be kept in mind in considering the foregoing scores; that is, that many of the pupils come from homes in which a second language is spoken, and many have trouble with English. Since these are scores from verbal tests, the drop-outs may not show as high IQs as they might on a non-verbal type of IQ test.

Personal Factors, Physical Defects. There was little indication that health factors, excepting pregnancy, were decisive in causing the drop-out of most of the La Crosse withdrawals. Of the 24 boys, only one listed a physical defect at the time of his withdrawal--an ankle fracture.

Among the girls, 18 listed no defects, six were pregnant, one had headaches, one an ear infection, one bad tonsils, and one nervousness.

Except for the pregnancies, it is questionable how much influence these physical defects had upon the actual withdrawal of the 21 per cent of the pupils who listed them.

Personal Factors. Age. The median age for boys at the time they responded to the survey was 26-27; for girls, 20-21,

and for both, 22-23. The higher median age for boys may be attributed to the fact that many of the younger men were in service or working outside the county, and were unresponsive to the questionnaires. Many of the younger girls still lived in the community, and, since they were acquainted with the author, evidenced more interest in the survey and thus cooperated.

Table 5. Age of drop-outs at time they responded to survey (as of July 1, 1955).

Age in years	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (28)	Both
16-17	-	5	5
18-19	-	6	6
20-21	3	4	7
22-23	5	4	9
24-25	2	3	5
26-27	4	2	6
28-29	4	2	6
30-31	4	2	6
32-33	2	-	2

Family Factors. Religion. Church preference was quite evenly divided between the Catholic and Protestant Churches. A total of 20 (38 per cent) were members of the Catholic Church, 18 (35 per cent) were members of a Protestant church, 4 (eight per cent) preferred a Protestant church, but were not members, and 10 (19 per cent) had no church preference. Percentages were as follows:

33% of boys, 43% of girls were Catholic members
 33% of boys, 36% of girls were Protestant members
 8% of boys, 7% of girls were Protestant non-members
 25% of boys, 15% of girls had no religious preference

Table 6. Religious background of drop-outs responding to survey.

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	: Girls (28)	: Both
Church preference			
Catholic	8	12	20
Protestant	10	12	22
Methodist	3	6	9
Lutheran	3	2	5
Christian	2	1	3
Ev. United Brethren	1	2	3
Baptist	1	1	2
No preference	6	4	10
Church membership			
Catholic member	8	12	20
Catholic non-member	-	-	-
Protestant member	8	10	18
Protestant non-member	2	2	4

In the matter of church attendance, data showed that the girls had stronger religious tendencies as evidenced by their attendance than the boys. The Catholics proved to be better attenders than the Protestants. Since dropping out, fewer Catholics attended church than before dropping out, but those who did attend, attended oftener. About the same number of Protestants attended since withdrawing as attended before withdrawing, but they attended oftener.

During the three months previous to the survey 20 Catholic drop-outs attended church 212 times, an average 10.6 times during the three months. Twenty-one Protestant drop-outs attended 136 times to average 6.05 times during the three months.

During the three months before the pupil dropped out, 16 Catholics attended 190 times, an average of 11.3 times; and 20 Protestants attended 182 times, an average of 9.1 times.

Family Factors. Nationality. In the matter of the nationality backgrounds of the drop-outs' families, it was found that most were predominantly German, with mixtures of other Central European stock. German, Czechoslovakian, and Bohemian were those mentioned oftenest.

Table 7. Nationality background of pupils responding to survey.

Original nationality of parents or grandparents		:	Boys (24)	:	Frequency Girls (23)	:	Both
German	pure		12		8		20
	part		1		3		4
Czechoslovakian	pure		5		-		5
	part		-		-		-
Bohemian	pure		3		2		5
	part		-		-		-
Irish	pure		-		1		1
	part		-		3		3
Russian	pure		-		2		2
	part		1		1		2
English	pure		-		1		1
	part		-		2		2
Dutch	pure		-		-		-
	part		-		2		2
Scotch	pure		-		-		-
	part		-		1		1
Indian	pure		-		-		-
	part		-		1		1
Jewish*	pure		-		-		-
	part		-		1		1
Unknown			3		3		6

*"Jewish," though technically a term pertaining to religion, is often confused in the lay mind and used as a term referring to nationality.

Family Factors. Citizenship. All parents of the drop-outs surveyed, contrary to what one might expect, were citizens of the United States. All girls' parents were natural-born citizens, but nine parents of boys were listed as naturalized citizens.

Table 8. Citizenship of parents of pupils responding to survey.

Citizenship of parents		Boys (24)	: Girls (23)
Father	natural-born	20	28
	naturalized	4	-
Mother	natural-born	19	28
	naturalized	5	-

Family Factors. Languages, reading, study facilities. A total of 52 per cent of the drop-outs came from homes in which a language other than English was spoken. Other languages included German, Bohemian, and Czech. This may account for their handicap and consequent dislike of English courses, which will be noted later in this study.

The Syracuse Study noted from their survey that, "It does not appear from these data that foreign language was any serious handicap."¹ However, it is the opinion of this author that the use of a second language in the home can be a contributing factor to leaving school before graduating. The second language weakens the youth's use of English, subsequently the English course is difficult and the resulting failure leads to the youth's leaving school.

Of those who responded, 90 per cent said they liked to read, and 81 per cent said they had a quiet spot at home where they could study undisturbed. This is in contrast to the situation of many drop-outs who disliked to read and had no suitable place

¹Smith, Harry P., op. cit., p. 22.

to study. It is possible, of course, that those who disliked to read did not respond to the survey.

Table 9. Languages, reading patterns, and study facilities of pupils responding to survey.

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (23)	Both
Languages spoken in home			
English only	9	13	22
English and German	9	11	20
English and Bohemian	3	1	4
English and Czech	3	-	3
No answer	-	3	3
Reading patterns			
Liked to read	21	25	46
Did not like to read	3	3	6
Study facilities			
Quiet spot for study	20	22	44
No quiet spot for study	4	3	7
No answer	-	3	3

Family Factors. Education of Parents. The most common grade for the parents of drop-outs to have finished was found to be the eighth grade. Forty-three had completed the eighth grade, 12 had completed high school, and eight had had some college work. There were 20 parents who did not complete their grade school education, and 19 were unknown. Since most parents were in school after the enactment of the compulsory school attendance law, the researcher is forced to wonder if laxness in enforcing the law is accountable for the low grade levels completed.

Table 10. Educational background of parents of pupils responding to survey.

Last grade completed	Frequency				
	Boys (24)		Girls (23)		Both
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	
3	-	1	1	1	3
4	-	2	-	1	3
5	-	2	1	-	3
6	-	1	2	3	6
7	-	1	1	3	5
mode 8	10	9	15	9	43
9 High school	-	1	-	1	2
10	1	-	-	-	1
11	-	-	-	1	1
12	3	1	2	2	3
13 College	-	-	2	1	3
14	1	-	-	1	2
15	-	-	-	-	-
16	1	-	1	1	3
Unknown	7	7	2	3	19

These findings are similar to those in the Syracuse Study where the most common grade completed was some grade between the seventh and ninth. In Syracuse's entire group, 34 of the fathers and mothers did not go farther than the sixth grade, 131 completed some grade between seventh and ninth, 99 withdrew above the ninth or completed the high school course, and only 24 had schooling beyond the senior high level.¹

Family Factors. Education of Siblings. Siblings of drop-outs have attained higher educational levels than their parents. This is in agreement with national trends of advancing educational

¹Ibid., p. 21.

attainments. Out of 164 siblings reported on, 93 had completed high school, a total of 57 per cent. A mere five drop-outs said none had completed the secondary grades.

Twenty out of the 164, or a total of 12 per cent of the siblings, had had some college work. Years attended and degrees earned were: seven had attended one year, one was a four-year registered nurse, one had received a degree, one had a B.S. from a commercial college, "some" had attended two years, and "some" had completed degrees. Generally speaking, the drop-outs were quite vague about the college work of their siblings.

Table 11. Educational background of siblings of pupils responding to survey.

Number of siblings old enough to have completed high school :	Total Siblings	Frequency		
		Boys (24)	Girls (28)	Both
1	13	6	7	13
2	22	7	4	11
3	9	-	3	3
4	28	3	4	7
5	25	1	4	5
6	12	1	1	2
7	35	3	2	5
8	8	-	1	1
12	12	1	-	1
Total siblings	164			
Number of siblings that have completed high school				
0	-	2	3	5
1	24	12	12	24
2	14	4	3	7
3	15	-	5	5
4	16	3	1	4
5	5	-	1	1
6	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-
8	8	-	1	1
11	11	1	-	1
Total siblings	93			

Table 11. (concl.)

Number of siblings old enough to have completed high school :	Total Siblings	Frequency		
		Boys (24)	Girls (23)	Both
Number of siblings that have attended college				
1	8	5	3	8
2	4	1	1	2
3	3	-	1	1
4	-	-	-	-
5	5	1	-	1
Total siblings	20			

Family Factors. Persons in Household. Only 63 per cent of the drop-outs lived in a normal family household at the time they were attending high school. By "normal" is meant a household containing a mother, a father, siblings, and no others. Only four of the drop-outs were "only" children; that is, they were the only child in the home at the time they attended high school. The size of the households of the drop-outs was rather large for this day and age. There was an average of 6.6 persons living in the homes of the boys, 6.1 persons in the homes of the girls, and an average of 6.3 persons in the homes of both.

The average number of siblings (including the drop-out being surveyed) in the homes of the boys was 4.7, for girls 4.2, and for both 4.4 siblings. The total number in the individual households ranged from two to 14.

Table 12. Persons living in household at time pupil withdrew from school.

	Boys (24)	: Girls (28)
Mother	21	24
Father	22	21
Stepmother	-	2
Stepfather	1	3
Grandmother	1	3
Grandfather	1	1
Number of brothers older		
5	1	-
4	-	-
3	-	2
2	2	4
1	6	7
Number of brothers younger		
6	1	-
5	-	-
4	-	-
3	3	1
2	1	7
1	11	5
Number of sisters older		
3	2	3
2	3	3
1	12	5
Number of sisters younger		
3	1	2
2	6	4
1	5	6
Others		
brother-in-law	1	1
uncle	-	1
Total in household		
including pupil		
14	1	-
13	1	-
12	-	1
11	1	1
10	1	2
9	2	3
8	1	2
7	3	1
6	3	4
5	2	5
4	6	3
3	1	4
2	1	2
1	-	-
Unknown	1	-

Table 12. (concl.)

	Boys (24)	: Girls (28)
Total siblings including pupil		
12	1	-
11	1	-
10	-	1
9	1	-
8	1	2
7	2	4
6	1	2
5	4	1
4	2	3
3	2	5
2	7	6
1	1	3
Unknown	1	1
Normal family group	19	14

Family Factors. Occupation and Home Ownership. The survey at La Crosse agrees with the national trend in that those in the rural groups receive less education than in any other group. The occupation of most drop-outs' parents was farming, small business owners, or skilled labor. A few were unskilled laborers, and four were unemployed or listed as unknown. One said her mother was receiving aid for dependent children. No professions were represented.

This agrees with the Manhattan study where 52 per cent of major wage-earners were in "crafts and farming" or were listed as a "laborer."¹

¹Bowman, op. cit., p. 10.

Table 13. Occupation of major wage-earning parent at time of pupil's withdrawal from school.

Occupation	Boys (24)	Frequency		Both
		Girls (23)		
Farming (owner)	14	4		18
Farming (tenant)	4	2		6
Business owner: undesignated	-	1		1
trucking	-	3		3
cafe	-	2		2
hardware store	1	-		1
car agency	-	1		1
general store	-	1		1
real estate agency	1	-		1
carpentry	-	1		1
Skilled laborer: carpenter	1	-		1
bricklayer	1	-		1
phone lineman	-	1		1
mechanic	-	2		2
oil drilling supt.	-	1		1
cook	-	1		1
Unskilled laborer: undesignated	1	3		4
janitor	1	-		1
hospital maid	-	1		1
Unknown or unemployed	-	4		4

Home ownership was exceptionally high for the group studied. Over 83 per cent of the parents owned their own homes (20 boys, 23 girls). Only four boys and five girls lived with their families in rented houses.

Family Factors. Pupil's Place of Residence. Of those who answered, 86 per cent stated they lived at home while attending high school; only eight per cent of those answering lived with others outside the family circle.

Table 14. Pupil's place of residence while attending high school

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (28)	Both
At home	20	23	43
With relatives	3	-	3
With close family friends	-	-	-
With others	1	3	4
No answer	-	2	2

School Factors. Grade Failure. Many drop-outs have a record of repeated grade failures. Of the pupils answering grade failure questions, 26 per cent had failed a grade at the elementary level. No one grade seemed to be at fault, but oddly enough the only grades failed were the odd-numbered ones: 1, 3, 5, and 7.

Table 15. Elementary grade failure of pupils dropping out

Did pupil fail an elementary grade?	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (28)	Both
No	18	21	39
Yes	5	5	10
Grade 1	2	1	3
Grade 3	-	2	2
Grade 5	1	2	3
Grade 7	2	-	2
No answer	1	2	3

School Factors. School Data. Since the median age of the drop-outs was 14 at the time of graduation from grade school, it could not be said that the group were generally retarded for their age.

The war years showed slight increases in total drop-outs, but of those who responded to the survey, there appeared to be no pattern for the year of withdrawal. The critical age for pupils to drop-out seemed to be 16 years, especially for the boys. Critical grade-level classes seemed to be the freshman and junior classes. This contrasted with the sophomore class, the critical class in Massachusetts. The greatest number were lost at La Crosse during the last half of the freshman year. Twenty-nine per cent of the girls were lost during the last half of their junior year.

Subject failure in high school was rather common to both boys and girls. Thirty-eight per cent of the boys failed at least one subject, and 25 per cent of the girls failed at least one.

How much help on his personal problems did the student receive, and from whom? Most said they received "some" or "no" help from adults and friends. Slightly less than half had difficulty with a particular teacher, and about half the drop-outs felt that the teachers had tried to help them.

One significant point brought out in the drop-outs' answers was that only 54 per cent of their parents took a definite stand against the pupil's withdrawal. The other 46 per cent were in favor of it, or at least did not discourage his withdrawal.

Sixteen pupils failed 25 courses (an average of 1.6 per pupil). The most common failures were in the English and mathematics departments. Regardless of the cultural advantages of knowing two languages, perhaps the two-language factor has a great deal to do with the failures in English.

Table 16. School data concerning drop-outs responding to survey.

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (23)	Both
<hr/>			
Age when graduated from eighth grade			
13	3	9	17
14 (median)	13	14	27
15	2	2	4
16	1	-	1
Age at time of withdrawal			
14	2	6	8
15	5	7	12
16 (median)	10	6	16
17	2	9	11
18	4	-	4
20 (a returned G.I.)	1	-	1
Year of withdrawal, 19-			
40	2	2	4
41	2	-	2
42	1	1	2
43	4	2	6
44	4	1	5
45	1	-	1
46	1	1	2
47	3	1	4
48	1	-	1
49	-	3	3
50	1	2	3
51	1	-	1
52	3	3	6
53	1	5	6
54	-	5	5
55	-	2	2
Class level at time of withdrawal			
Freshman	12	8	20
Sophomore	4	5	9
Junior	6	9	15
Senior	2	6	8
Number of semesters attended			
0	2	2	4
1	4	3	7
2 (mode)	8	8	16
3	-	1	1
4	3	3	6
5	3	2	5

Table 16. (concl.)

		Frequency		
		Boys (24)	Girls (28)	Both
6		2	8	10
7		2	1	3
Did pupil fail any subject in high school?				
No		15	21	36
Yes		9	7	16
English		5	4	9
Algebra		6	1	7
Gen. Mathematics		1	3	4
Home Economics		-	2	2
General Science		-	1	1
Physical Education		-	1	1
Home Room		-	1	1
Total				25
Amount of help received from adults in school (not just teachers) concerning pupil's personal problems				
Much		-	2	2
Some		9	9	18
Little		1	3	4
None		11	9	20
No answer		3	5	8
Amount of help received from friends				
Much		-	2	2
Some		9	9	18
Little		1	3	4
None		11	9	20
No answer		3	5	8
Did any teachers try to help?				
Yes		11	11	22
No		10	10	20
No answer		3	7	10
Parents' attitude toward pupil's withdrawal				
Encouraged withdrawal		3	1	4
Discouraged withdrawal		16	12	28
Neither encouraged or discouraged		5	10	15
No answer		-	5	5

School Factors. Activities, Offices, etc. Agreeing with the common drop-out symptom of few or no activities, the drop-outs at La Crosse indicated that 71 per cent of the boys and 46 per cent of the girls participated in no activities outside of class. Of those who did participate, the girls participated in about twice as many activities as the boys. Seven boys averaged 1.7 activities apiece, and 15 girls averaged 2.7 apiece, about twice as many. The greatest participation was by a girl with an IQ of 120, who withdrew during her junior year, and who listed seven activities.

Table 17. Activities, offices, and honors of pupils dropping out.

		Frequency		
		Boys (24)	: Girls (28)	: Both
Glee Club, Mixed Chorus		1	10	11
Kayettes or Girl Reserves		-	12	12
F. H. A.		-	6	6
Cheerleading		-	3	3
Officer	class	-	2	2
	F. H. A.	-	1	1
	Kayette	-	1	1
Pep Club		-	3	3
Sports	football	5	-	5
	basketball	3	-	3
	track	1	-	1
	baseball	1	-	1
Band		1	1	2
Play House		-	1	1
Student Council		-	1	1
None		17	13	30

Withdrawal Factors. Reasons. Most pupils seemed to recognize the fact that there was no single reason for their withdrawal. Dislike of school (a vague term), marriage, home

conditions, and school problems seemed to predominate as causes. Only one, a boy, admitted it was his "own bull-headedness" that had made him quit, and only one other, also a boy, said he had no good reason for quitting. Maybe more understanding on the part of the teachers and principal and more "parental push" would have kept many of these pupils from becoming drop-outs.

The reasons listed were not unique--they could be found on any drop-out's list anywhere in the United States. In answer to the question, "What was the principal reason behind your decision to leave school?" the following results were obtained:

Table 18. Principal reason behind pupil's decision to leave school.

Reason	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (28)	Both
Didn't like school	6	9	15
Marriage	-	9	9
Home conditions			17
help needed	5	1	6
lack of funds	4	2	6
family illness	4	-	4
unsettled home life	-	1	1
Armed forces	5	-	5
Pupil's illness (not including pregnancy)	-	3	3
School reasons			13
dislike for a faculty member	2	5	7
discipline	3	-	3
dislike for students	2	1	3
No reason	1	-	1

Later on in the questionnaire the drop-outs were asked to list in the order of importance their reasons for withdrawal. In this section, which was a bit more specific than the first (Table 19) the main reasons given by boys for their withdrawal

were: illness in the family, entered military service, lack of interest, financial reasons, bored and restless, and did not feel a part of school life. Marriage, lack of interest, and did not feel a part of school life headed the causes listed by the girls.

Table 19. Chief reasons for withdrawal from school, ranked in order of importance (1 indicates main reason, 2 the reason next in importance, etc.)

Reason	Number of pupils ranking each reason				
	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Boys</u>					
Illness in family	5				
Entered military service	5	1			
Help needed at home	3	3			
Lack of interest in school work	3	1	3	1	
Did not feel a part of school life	2	1	1	2	
Financial reasons	1	3	2	1	
Bored and restless	1	5		1	1
Disciplinary difficulties	2		1		
Obtained work	1	1	3		
Could not get along with other students	1				
Poor scholarship		1	1	1	
Illness of pupil				1	
<u>Girls</u>					
Lack of interest in school work	9	3	3		
Marriage	9				
Did not feel a part of school life	3	1	4	2	
Illness of pupil	3	1			
Financial reasons	1	2			
Teachers	1	2			
Help needed at home	1	1	1		
Reached legal age for withdrawal	1				
Poor scholarship		1	1		
Bored and restless		3	1		
Disciplinary difficulties		1		1	
Illness in family		1			
Obtained work			1		
Religious prejudice			1		
Couldn't get along with other students					1

In Harold J. Dillon's report on the investigation made by the National Child Labor Committee are listed the frequency of reasons given by 957 youth as of first importance in their decision to leave school. It is significant to note that 69 per cent of these reasons relate to school, with only 31 per cent relating to financial or personal reasons.¹

In Manhattan, Bowman found 21 per cent left school because of "marriage," 16 per cent "had to work," and 12 per cent quit because of "lack of interest." "Relations with teacher(s)," "low ability or work too hard," and "not enough credits to graduate with my class" each accounted for nine per cent of the drop-outs. Four other lesser categories were listed.²

Whereas the Syracuse Study showed "dissatisfaction with school" as having the greatest frequency as cause of withdrawal for both boys and girls,³ the La Crosse study showed "illness in family," "entered military service," and "help needed at home" as reasons ranking ahead of school dissatisfaction for the boys. The girls' "lack of interest in school work" was consistent with the Syracuse pattern, however.

Withdrawal Factors. Home Conditions. Eighty-five per cent of those answering said home conditions did not influence their withdrawal. However, the main factors at home which did have an effect on the withdrawal were financial needs and the student's help was needed at home.

¹Dillon, op. cit., p. 50.

²Bowman, op. cit., p. 21.

³Smith, op. cit., p. 23.

Table 20. Home conditions influencing pupil's withdrawal.

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (25)	Both
Parents' attitude			
Against pupil's attending high school	3	2	5
Favored pupil's attending high school	21	23	44
No answer	-	3	3
Did other home conditions influence withdrawal?			
No	16	19	35
Yes	4	2	6
help needed at home	2	1	3
financial need	2	1	3
trouble with stepmother	-	1	1
trouble with father	-	1	1
No answer	4	7	11

As can be observed from Table 20, there were nine per cent of the parents who were actually opposed to the pupil's attending high school.

Withdrawal Factors. Likes and Dislikes of School. In the answers received from the drop-outs, there was a lack of well-defined likes and dislikes. Best-liked "things" about school included specific courses, sports, and other activities. Least-liked were certain other specific classes, certain faculty members, and the task of studying.

Table 21. Pupils' likes and dislikes about school

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (28)	Both
Things liked best about school			
Sports	5	-	5
People	2	-	2
Reading	1	-	1
Long class periods	-	1	1
Classes			
shop	1	-	
world history	1	-	
driver education	-	1	
bookkeeping, typing	-	1	
mathematics	-	2	
music	-	1	
			7
Activities	-	5	5
Everything	-	2	2
Nothing	-	2	2
No answer	14	13	27
Things liked least about school			
Classes			
English	1	4	
mathematics	2	-	
physical education	1	-	
			8
Prejudiced faculty	2	3	5
Study and homework	2	2	4
Long classes	1	-	1
Rules	-	1	1
Students	-	1	1
Nothing	-	1	1
No answer	15	16	31

In the area of likes and dislikes of specific subjects, it was found that home economics was a favorite with the girls, and mathematics and shop courses were best liked by the boys.

English was the main dislike of boys and mathematics of girls. As is the case in many such studies, "hand work" classes seemed to be the favorites of the drop-outs.

There seems to be very little pattern relative to likes

Table 22. (concl.)

		Frequency		
		Boys (24)	: Girls (23)	: Both
Science, biology		1	2	3
Bookkeeping		-	2	2
History, geography		1	1	2
Citizenship		1	-	1
Spelling		1	-	1
Physical education		1	-	1
None		-	2	2
Did taking a certain course influence decision to drop out?				
No		22	23	46
Yes	English	1	-	1
	Physical education	1	-	1
	not designated	-	1	1
No answer		-	4	4

In regard to the effects of required courses, Bowman found only five drop-outs who listed anything under "Required" courses which influenced the pupil's decision to leave school before graduating. English was listed by 50 per cent, constitution by 17 per cent, mathematics by 17 per cent, and biology by 17 per cent.¹

Twenty-seven per cent of drop-outs were influenced to leave school because of their dislike for a certain teacher.

Table 23. Did dislike for a certain teacher influence decision to drop out?

		Frequency		
		Boys (24)	: Girls (23)	: Both
Yes		5	9	14
No		18	15	33
No answer		1	4	5

¹Bowman, op. cit., p. 22.

There is a close relationship in the 27 per cent of this study who disliked a certain teacher and the 26 per cent in Bowman's study in Manhattan who put part of the blame for leaving on dislike for a certain teacher. Thirty-two per cent had had difficulty with a certain teacher and 84 per cent indicated that the teacher-pupil relationship was not all it should be, according to Bowman.¹

Occupational History and Factors. Although most drop-outs indicated they worked at home, 43 per cent of those answering worked at some other job while they were in school (33 per cent of the boys, and 52 per cent of the girls). About one-third worked because the money was needed and the other two-thirds worked for personal reasons. About 65 per cent of them worked 20 hours or more per week.

Many (36 per cent) lacked well-defined occupational goals while in school. The best-defined ones seemed to be farming and homemaking. Very few (19 per cent) actually entered the occupations which they had hoped to enter after leaving school. The most agreement between goals and attainment lay in the fields of farming and homemaking. Apparently, the better-defined the goal, the more likely the individual is to attain it.

The average number of jobs held by the boys since their withdrawal was 3.0. This is the same as those held by the girls who had worked. The average number held by all girls is 1.8.

Homemaking was the most common occupation for the girls, and

¹Ibid., pp. 24, 25.

farming was the most common for the boys. Very little skill was represented in the drop-outs' current occupations.

In looking ahead to their futures, 85 per cent of the boys felt their present occupations offered adequate possibilities for life and so would be permanent. The girls' occupational outlook was quite narrow, because they looked ahead to marriage. Only two felt their present jobs were adequate for life.

The degree of dissatisfaction varies greatly with individuals and with the ages of workers. In December, 1949, Dr. Robert Hoppock, of New York University, summarized 144 studies. The variation of dissatisfaction ranged from one to 92 per cent, with a median of 19 per cent. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that probably 25 per cent of the drop-outs, or 10 per cent of secondary school registration, represent this dissatisfied group.¹

The most common wage for boys was \$40 to \$60 a week. Only one girl's wages rose above the \$40 mark. The highest income reported was that of \$8000 annually, earned by a farmer.

Eighty-eight per cent of all the boys felt their present job was a good one, but 71 per cent of all boys felt that a high school education would help them get a better one.

Of those surveyed, 85 per cent lived in Rush County or an adjoining county at present.

¹Smith, op. cit., p. 5.

Table 24. Work background and present status of drop-outs.

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (23)	Both
Did pupil work while in school?			
Why?			
No	14	11	25
Yes	7	12	19
Money needed	1	3	4
Spending money	2	1	3
Wanted to	1	4	5
Get experience	-	1	1
No answer	3	5	8
Number of hours worked per week			
5-10	1	4	5
10-15	-	-	-
15-20	1	-	1
20-25	3	2	5
over 25	1	5	6
Occupational goals at time of withdrawal			
Farming	15		
Mechanic	2		
Doctor	1		
Housewife		9	
Secretary		2	
Nurse		2	
Air hostess		1	
Teacher		1	
Cosmetologist		1	
Unknown or undecided	6	12	18
Occupation entered following withdrawal			
Farming	11		
Armed forces	6		
Construction work	2		
Filling station work	2		
Implement store work	1		
Welding	1		
Homemaking		15	
Cafe and other food service work		10	
Clerk		1	
Cosmetology		1	
Unknown	1	1	2
Number of occupations same as goals	3	7	10
Number of jobs held since withdrawal			
1	7	5	12
2	7	4	11
3	2	2	4
4	4	2	6

Table 24. (cont.)

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	: Girls (23)	: Both
5	-	2	2
6	2	1	3
7	1	-	1
8	-	1	1
10	1	-	1
None	-	11	11
Present occupation			
Homemaking	-	17	
Farming	7	-	
Cafe work	-	6	
Trucking	3		
Mechanic	4		
Utilities	2		
Construction	2		
Lumberyard employee	1		
Filling station employee	1		
Bakery employee	1		
City employee	1		
Fish farm employee	1		
Armed forces	1		
Police	1		
Welding	1		
Dental lab technician	1		
Cosmetology		1	
Clerk		1	
Doctor's assistant		1	
None		2	
Is present occupation likely to be permanent?			
Yes	18	4	
No	4	3	
No answer or doesn't apply	2	21	
Does present job have adequate possibilities for life?			
Yes	18	2	
No	3	5	
No answer or doesn't apply	3	21	
Present weekly income			
\$20 or less	1	1	
\$20-\$40	1	5	
\$40-\$60	8	-	
\$60-\$80	-	1	
\$80-\$100	6	-	
\$150	1	-	
No answer	7	21	

Table 24. (concl.)

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (28)	Both
Is present job a good one?			
Yes	21	5	26
No	2	2	4
No answer or doesn't apply	1	21	22
Would high school education help get a better job?			
Yes	17	5	22
No	5	2	7
No answer or doesn't apply	2	21	23
Place of residence			
Rush County	16	22	38
County adjoining Rush County	3	3	6
Kansas	1	2	3
Overseas	2	-	2
Colorado	1	-	1
Oklahoma	1	-	1
Oregon	-	1	1

Present situation. Hobbies. As is the case with many drop-outs, those from La Crosse showed a definite narrowness of interests. Nearly 31 per cent had no hobbies, but the boys had more than the girls, 36 to 25 per cent.

Table 25. Present hobbies of students responding to survey.

Hobbies	Frequency	
	Boys (24)	Girls (28)
None	6	10
Fishing, hunting, coon hunting	9	
Sports, riding, swimming	4	
Raising cattle	2	
Automobiles and mechanics	2	
Pigeon raising	1	
Building things for the home	1	
Horticulture	1	
Cooking and sewing		3
Reading		4
Collecting pictures		2

Table 25. (concl.)

Hobbies	Frequency
	Boys (24) : Girls (23)
Drawing	1
Skating	1
Photography	1

Present Situation. Education Since Withdrawal. No further education has been received, since withdrawing from high school, by 69 per cent of the drop-outs. The boys have done better than the girls, since over half the boys have received further training. One-third of the boys received theirs in military service. Only 14 per cent of the girls have done further work; one is now finishing high school by correspondence.

Table 26. Education since withdrawing from high school.

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	: Girls (23)	: Both
No	12	24	36
Yes	12	4	16
trade school courses			
Studebaker repair	1		
typing	2		
cosmetology	1		
night school		1	
correspondence			
dairy husbandry	2		
American high school		1	
others			
military school courses	4		
Ft. Hays	1		
Hadley Tech.	1		
Income tax class		1	
Doctor's assistant course		1	

Present Situation. Family Status. Of the 52 drop-outs replying, 63 per cent were married and 37 per cent were single. Twenty-four of them had 45 children, an average number of 1.9 children per drop-out. Only two listed dependents other than spouse and children at present time. One boy listed a dependent sister-in-law, and one girl listed three other dependents.

Table 27. Present family status of drop-outs.

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (28)	Both
Single	11	7	18
Married	13	17	30
No answer	-	4	4
Children			
No	5	1	6
Yes	10	14	24
1 child	3	7	10
2 children	5	5	10
3 children	-	2	2
4 children	1	-	1
5 children	1	-	1

Present Situation. Value of Education. At the time of the study, 63 per cent of the drop-outs were sorry they quit, because they felt they needed the education and it would help them get a better job. Forty-six per cent said their feelings toward school have changed. They now think education is needed, and they would like to be back. The courses they felt that had been the most help to them since leaving school were home economics, English, and mathematics. However, seven felt that none had helped, and two felt that all were helpful. Fifty-five per cent felt education had not helped them secure employment in the past.

Table 23. Value of education from viewpoint of drop-outs.

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (23)	Both
Has education helped secure employment in past?			
Yes	6	7	13
No	13	11	24
Doesn't apply	-	7	7
No answer	5	3	8
Have you ever been sorry you quit?			
What way?			
No	7	8	15
Yes	17	15	32
Would help get better job	2	8	10
Need education	5	1	6
Would like to finish	1	2	3
Education widens knowledge	-	2	2
Would help ability to reason	1	-	1
Need algebra now	1	-	1
Didn't want to quit; had to	1	-	1
Could help my children more	-	1	1
No answer	-	5	5
Have feelings toward school changed since withdrawal? How			
No	11	14	25
Yes	11	10	21
Education is needed or desired	6	4	10
Wish I were back	2	2	4
Education would help solve my problems	-	1	1
I could learn more	-	2	2
No answer	2	4	6
School courses that have helped since leaving school			
Home economics	-	11	11
Mathematics	3	1	4
English	1	2	3
Shop	1	-	1
Reading	1	-	1
Typing	-	1	1
Agriculture	1	-	1
All	2	-	2
None	4	3	7

This percentage (68%) is slightly higher than the 60 per cent in the Syracuse study who stated that, in the light of their experience, they would now stay in school longer.¹

In Manhattan, Bowman found 74 per cent who were sorry they had left school, but a large discrepancy was apparent in that only 48 per cent said their feelings toward school had changed. Only 16 per cent of them had done anything about getting further education, 42 per cent said education had not helped them secure employment in the past, and 87 per cent said, in thinking about the future, that they thought a high school education would help them.²

Future Educational Outlook. When the La Crosse drop-outs were questioned in regard to possible future education and the value of it, 71 per cent of all those responding felt that an education would help them in their future. Actually, 19 per cent of them stated they planned to finish high school some day. This percentage included both boys and girls. Six boys and seven girls said they were interested in night school classes, and one boy and six girls were interested in part-time day school work. Secretarial and senior required courses seemed to be the most wanted subjects.

¹Ibid., p. 32.

²Bowman, op. cit., pp. 30-33.

Table 29. Drop-outs' attitudes toward educational future.

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (23)	Both
In thinking about future, would a high school education help?			
Yes	19	18	37
No	3	3	6
Maybe	2	1	3
Don't know	-	1	1
No answer	-	5	5
Do you ever plan to finish high school?			
No	14	12	26
Yes	3	7	10
Maybe	2	4	6
No answer	5	5	10
Are you interested in night school courses? What courses?			
No	15	13	28
Yes	6	7	13
Typing	2	3	
Shorthand	-	2	
Bookkeeping	1	1	
English	1	1	
History	-	1	
Speech	-	1	
Engineering	1	-	
No answer	3	8	11
Are you interested in part-time day school work? What courses?			
No	19	15	34
Yes	1	6	7
Secretarial	-	2	
American history	-	1	
Typing	-	1	
Engineering	1	-	
No answer	4	7	11

Drop-outs' Suggestions for Improving School. The concluding question on the questionnaire read: "Each year we have a number of boys and girls who withdraw from high school for various reasons. Do you have any suggestions that might help make the school so interesting and helpful to these boys and girls that,

at least most of them would not withdraw, but would continue until graduation?"

The drop-outs seemed to be lacking in definite suggestions for improving the school. Altho they had a variety of complaints about the school, their suggestions for improvement were quite vague; 53 per cent lacked ideas concrete enough to put on paper.

Probably the most common suggestions for improvement could be grouped under the heading of more personalized interest in the pupils on the part of the teachers.

Table 30. How the school could better help pupils so they would remain until graduation.

	Frequency		
	Boys (24)	Girls (28)	Both
Better teachers with more kindness and understanding and more interest in helping <u>all</u> students.	2	3	5
Fewer teacher's pets	1	1	2
Help get a job or better job for the working pupil	1	2	3
Help pupils learn respect for others and how to work	-	2	2
Create more interest in school	-	1	1
Give more help in English and mathematics	1	-	1
Change principals	1	-	1
No better help	-	2	2
Don't know	5	2	7
No answer	13	14	27

It might be of interest to read in their own words some of the statements made by the drop-outs relative to their school experience and outlook. Statements made by some of the boys were as follows:

"I think a high school education is very important."

". . . need more individual attention."

". . . make subject matter more interesting and more pertaining to everyday life and job."

". . . a better means of selecting instructors to do the teaching. More varied subjects made available to students."

"I would like to mention some things, but I don't feel that I should because it was more out of bull-headedness on my part that I did quit."

". . . building. . . need to enlarge it a good deal and kinda give it a little more modern look."

"Mr. Keith (the principal) was about the only teacher who helped me. I used to wash his car in order to take music lessons."

". . . change principals. . ."

". . . I don't actually know why I quit."

". . . I wanted to continue but my parents did not have enough money to send all of us."

"I spent two years in a denominational school, was out one year, then had one very enjoyable year at LRHS. I was drafted, and when I came back I was too old."

The girls were more verbal in their comments than the boys, and many of them discussed their situation at length. Some excerpts from their letters follow, with major grammar errors corrected:

". . . have a closer understanding between teacher and pupil. And have unprejudiced teachers."

"I believe a little more individual attention from the teachers would help."

". . . more help from teachers. More kindness from fellow students. Kick prejudice of religion etc. out the window. That's another reason for my leaving. I do hope these few lines may help you. Because some day my children might go to school there."

". . . 5 teachers are snobs. . . night school for the

married girls. . . the school itself is a very good one. . . I feel the teachers have taught well in teaching the subject, but not in handling the kids. . . Now that I'm married I would give my right arm for my diploma as I feel that last year I would learn a lot more, although I don't use it. I just wish all the kids would and could know how much school means to them. But I don't think any of them will really learn the true value until they are out."

"I think that La Crosse High School needs a new principal because Mr. Keith is not at all well and therefore hasn't the patients (patience) he needs to teach and help with the students' problems. . . partial to band kids."

". . . more social activities with all the teachers and students."

"I really don't know what could be done besides what is being done now."

". . . have all students be treated the same whether poor financially or rich."

"I would suggest offering more interesting subjects, also less crabby teachers."

"School is a grand thing, you can't get very far now days if you don't have education, that is my opinion."

"The majority of students do not and will not realize until it is too late what a high school education will profit them in the future. Make them realize without finishing high school a job is nearly impossible to find. They learn to work with people, make them more broad-minded, their minds will be more alert by learning different subjects."

"I feel if the parents of pupils attending school would encourage and help them and not make them feel as slaves and problems, more children would finish. My one comment on school is, if the pupils coming from poor families were treated equal to the more fortunate ones, their chances of completing school would be greater. However, as in my case, the insecure feeling and being a problem for our parents was the handicap in many cases. As for our schools they are great. If only I could have realized the main thing I threw away by quitting school."

"Parents are the most encouraging to see that their children finish school. By letting them take part in school activities."

"I don't know about withdrawing from school, since I didn't start school. But I do think if the high school would have the eighth graders come up to the high school for day before school lets out a lot more might decide to go. It will give them a

better idea about school and show them what a wonderful thing high school really is. And if they would have different kinds of pamphlets to show what different kinds of jobs there are. It would help them make up their mind about what they want to accomplish throughout their life. While reading the pamphlet they will realize that they have to have a high school education to accomplish it. Whenever their grades aren't up to where they should be, they can always dig out that old pamphlet and then they will realize to be something they will have to study harder and more often."

"The slower student should have special study or special help instead of just being hinted to they can't learn as fast as someone else. That gives an inferior complex."

"I quit because of Keith."

Drop-outs interviewed by Bowman seemed to have the same difficulty in making concrete suggestions. Only 14 in Manhattan had suggestions as to how the school might better have helped them. A total of 57 per cent of the suggestions dealt with guidance and pleas for better help and understanding on the part of the teachers.¹

Conclusions Drawn from Study at La Crosse

In summarizing the study of the drop-outs from the La Crosse Rural High School, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. Approximately six per cent of the school enrollees withdrew each year.
2. Generally speaking, drop-outs were of average IQ and did have the ability to complete high school.
3. The religious background and attendance of the drop-outs would compare favorably with that of the general populace.

¹Ibid., p. 35.

About 38 per cent were Catholics, 43 per cent were Protestants, and 19 per cent had no church preference.

4. The nationality background was predominantly German, with some Czech, Bohemian, and other lesser backgrounds mentioned.

5. All parents were United States citizens, nine by way of naturalization.

6. Fifty-two per cent of the drop-outs knew a second language--German, Bohemian, or Czech.

7. Most common grade finished by parents was eighth. There were 20 who had not completed grade school.

8. Of the drop-outs' siblings, 57 per cent had a high school education, and 12 per cent had some college work.

9. Average number in the drop-out's household was 6.6 persons, and average number of siblings was 4.4. Sixty-three per cent of the drop-outs came from a normal home grouping.

10. Most common occupations of parents were farming, small business owners, or skilled labor; 83 per cent owned their homes.

11. While attending school, 86 per cent lived at home. Grade failure was experienced by 26 per cent, but most were not retarded at eighth grade graduation.

12. Most drop-outs withdrew at age 16 while enrolled as a freshman or junior.

13. At least one high school subject was failed by 38 per cent of the boys and 25 per cent of the girls. Sixteen pupils had failed 25 courses, an average of 1.6 per pupil. Most

common failures were in English and mathematics.

14. Some or no help was received from adults, teachers, or friends in helping the drop-out with his personal problems. Slightly less than half had difficulty with a certain teacher, and half felt the teachers had tried to help.

15. Only 54 per cent of parents took a definite stand against the pupil's withdrawal.

16. No activities were listed by 71 per cent of the boys and 46 per cent of the girls. Girls participated twice as much as boys.

17. Dislike of school, marriage, home conditions, school problems, family illness, military service, financial reasons, and lack of interest in school seemed to predominate as reasons for withdrawal.

18. Nine per cent of the parents actually opposed the pupil's attending high school.

19. There was a lack of well-defined likes and dislikes of things about school.

20. Home economics was the favorite subject for girls, mathematics and shop for the boys. Main dislike was English for boys, and mathematics for girls.

21. Dislike for a certain teacher influenced 27 per cent to withdraw.

22. Forty-three per cent of the drop-outs worked while attending high school, 65 per cent worked 20 or more hours per week. Only 33 per cent worked because the money was needed.

23. Best-defined occupational goals were in farming and

and homemaking; 33 per cent lacked well-defined goals. Only 19 per cent entered occupation that was previous goal; again farming and homemaking showed the greatest agreement between goal and attainments.

24. Average number of jobs held by drop-outs since withdrawal was 3.0 for both boys and girls. At present farming was the most common job for the boys and homemaking for the girls. Very little skill was represented in present occupations.

25. Eighty-five per cent felt their present occupation offered adequate possibilities for life so would be permanent. Most common wage for boys was \$40-\$60 a week, highest was \$8000 annually. Only one girl earned more than \$40 a week.

26. Eighty-eight per cent felt present job is a good one, but a high school education would help get a better one.

27. Eighty-five per cent lived in Rush County or adjoining county.

28. Boys had more hobbies at present than girls; 31 per cent listed no hobbies.

29. No further education had been received by 69 per cent of the drop-outs; 50 per cent of the boys had received more mainly thru the armed forces, and 14 per cent of the girls had.

30. Sixty-eight per cent said they were sorry they had quit school; 46 per cent said feelings toward school had changed since withdrawal. Most valuable courses to the pupil since he had been out were home economics, English, and mathematics.

31. A high school education would help in the future, according to 71 per cent; 19 per cent planned to finish some day,

and some were interested in night school or part-time day school classes. Secretarial and senior required courses were most wanted.

32. Main suggestions for improvement of school lay in a more personalized interest in pupil on the part of the teachers.

33. None showed interest in attending school for cultural reasons or advantages.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING HOLDING POWER

In order to improve the holding power of the La Crosse Rural High School, the author submits the following suggestions:

School Plant

In the new building provide for private counseling rooms, a testing program, more extra-class activities, an increased program of vocational arts courses, and room to accommodate future increases in the school's enrollment.

Teachers and Follow-ups

1. Assign drop-outs to a counselor or one specified teacher who can initiate a follow-up.

2. Make entire faculty aware of the part each plays in reducing drop-outs.

3. Check summer withdrawals first week of school so they are able to be contacted and can return without undue loss of class time.

4. Keep permanent records more accurate and up-to-date.

5. Maintain a consistent testing program which is given during the first weeks of school and which offers non-verbal,

as well as verbal IQ tests.

6. Always hold exit interviews with drop-outs.

7. Lighten teacher loads so more time for counseling and friendliness will be available. (Perhaps by providing student graders to assist the teachers, this could be achieved.)

8. Enlist aid of the community (thru organizations or individuals) in getting community parents to visit the drop-out and his family and try to help them see the value of high school graduation.

Curriculum

1. Provide an effective reading and remedial English course (ignorance of the language arts was quite in evidence in survey answers).

2. Provide more two-period courses so more project work can be undertaken.

3. Teach classes on as many levels as needed, in order that each may understand and profit from it.

4. Work for better articulation with the public and parochial grade schools.

5. Provide free lessons on school time, so students who work or have financial problems will not be denied the privileges of music, speech, etc.

General

1. Issue a different diploma for those who do not meet the regular scholastic standards, but yet attended school and

achieved on their own ability level.

2. Provide a program of part-time employment, scholarships, and loans for those who are financially unable to attend. (The present Scotty Scholarship which is offered to one of the high ranking seniors the night of graduation is of no benefit to the potential drop-out who may be having scholastic difficulties as well as financial ones.)

3. Subsidize more extra-class activities so more can participate and less time will have to be spent on money-making activities of questionable educational value.

4. Eliminate the squeeze-out procedures which cut off the pupil from feeling a part of school life.

5. Arrange for the transfer and tuition of potential drop-outs who might become better adjusted to life in a different high school (there are four others in Rush County to choose from).

6. Enlist the aid of the priest, ministers, and other lay leaders in reducing drop-outs.

7. Accelerate courses for the college preparatory students; let slower ones work at own rate.

8. Improve public relations so there will be greater rapport between the community and school and the parents and teachers. Community warmth could be improved.

9. Make periodic progress reports to the community indicating what has been accomplished in dealing with the drop-out problem.

10. Encourage teachers to bring the educational viewpoint to the community citizens by joining the various social and civic

organizations and participating in community events and projects.

11. Provide night and day school classes as indicated.

Broad Recommendations

1. Establish four-county, area, or state vocational high schools which would provide terminal courses in such fields as barbering, dental assistant work, beauty culture, commercial cooking, cleaning and pressing, tailoring, shoe repair, farm work, maid service, child care, catering and food service, auto repair, practical nursing, truck driving and filing of reports, carpentry, business office work, teacher's assistant work, pottery, bakery work, janitoring, police and fireman work, etc.

2. Provide a standard questionnaire thru the United States Office of Education, so graduate students could add to the knowledge of the national drop-out situation, as well as the local situation, thru answers that are organized, not erratic.

3. Promote the idea that every youth is entitled to a high school education that fits his needs.

4. Realize that the drop-out is not lost to schooling. (Seventy-one per cent felt a high school education would help in the future, 19 per cent planned to finish some day, and some were interested in night school or part-time day school courses.)

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APPENDIX

LA CROSSE RURAL HIGH SCHOOL
La Crosse, Kansas

August 5, 1954

To Former L.R.H.S. Students:

Dear:

I am writing you to ask a favor. In looking over the records of the La Crosse Rural High School, I find that you did not complete your high school course. The favor that I ask is that you answer, as best you can, the questionnaire enclosed with this letter. I shall compare your answers with those of your classmates who also left school before graduating. In so doing, I hope to find things which will suggest ways to change and improve our school so that no one will want to leave before graduation.

You will notice that many of the questions may be answered by simply drawing a circle around "yes" or "no"; others ask for your opinions and ideas. Write as much or as little as you care to. If you don't know some of the information, write "don't know" in the blank. Please remember that your answers are strictly confidential, and no one will read them except me. Please remember that your answers will be of the most value when they are complete and honest. You will note that I have not asked you to sign your name in order to keep your information completely confidential and anonymous.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to fill out this questionnaire and to return it as quickly as possible.

If our records are incorrect and you have actually graduated from high school, simply indicate at the bottom of this page the school from which you graduated and the year you graduated.

Since I am doing this study for my thesis for my Master of Science degree from Kansas State, I am eagerly awaiting your early answer.

Thank you so much for your help.

Sincerely,

(Miss) Dora Lee Dauma
202 E. 8th
Scott City, Kansas

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS WITHDRAWING BEFORE FINISHING HIGH SCHOOL

In the following questions draw a circle around the correct answer for you (in questions which give a choice of answer), or write the answer in the blank.

Personal Data

1. Date of birth (month, day, year) 1. _____, _____, _____
2. Sex 2. male _____, female _____
3. Church preference 3. _____
4. Are you a member? 4. yes _____ no _____
5. Give the approximate number of times you have attended church within the last three months 5. 12 10 8 6 4 2 0
6. On an average, how many times per month did you attend church in the three months before your withdrawal from school? 6. 4 3 2 1 0
7. List any physical defects you had at the time of your withdrawal from school 7. _____
8. Original nationality of your parents or grandparents (Example: French-Canadian) 8. _____
9. Place a check by those persons who were living in your household at the time of your withdrawal from school

9.

mother _____
 father _____
 stepmother _____
 stepfather _____
 grandmother _____
 grandfather _____
 number of brothers older than you _____
 number of brothers younger than you _____
 number of sisters older than you _____
 number of sisters younger than you _____
 other persons (name) _____

10. Are your parents citizens of the United States? 10. both father, mother _____
neither _____
11. If so, were they natural-born or naturalized citizens? 11. natural born, father _____
naturalized, father _____
mother: _____
natural-born; naturalized. _____

12. What was the occupation of your major wage-earning parent at the time of your withdrawal from school? 12. _____
13. Was he or she an owner? tenant? employee? laborer? or what? in that occupation? 13. _____
14. Was any language other than English spoken in your home? If so, what? 14. yes _____ no _____
15. Did your parents own their own home? 15. yes _____ no _____
16. Did you or do you like to read? 16. yes _____ no _____
17. What is your main hobby? 17. _____
18. Did you have a quiet spot at home where you could study undisturbed? 18. yes _____ no _____
19. What was the last grade in school your mother completed? 19. _____
20. What was the last grade your father completed? 20. _____
21. How many of your brothers and sisters are old enough to have completed high school? 21. _____
22. Of those who are old enough, how many have completed high school? 22. _____
23. How many have attended college? 23. _____
24. How far have they gone in college, or what degrees have they received? 24. _____

School Data

25. How old were you when you graduated from the 8th grade? 25. _____
26. Age when you withdrew from school 26. _____
27. Year you withdrew (Example: 1943) 27. _____
28. Occupation you had hoped to enter as your life's work 28. _____
29. Class you were in when you withdrew 29. _____
30. Occupation you did enter after withdrawing from school. 30. _____
31. Number of semesters you attended high school (Example: if you finished your sophomore year, but did not start your junior year, you attended four semesters. If you withdrew during the middle of your second semester, freshman year, you attended two semesters, etc.) 31. _____
32. Did you fail any subjects in high school? 32. yes _____ no _____
33. If so, which ones? 33. _____
34. What was the principal reason behind your decision to leave school? 34. _____
35. Did you receive help from any adults in the school concerning your personal problems? 35. much _____ some _____
little _____ none _____

36. Did your friends offer you much help with your personal problems? 36. much little
some none
37. Did you have any difficulties with any particular teacher? 37. yes no
38. Did any of your teachers try to help you with your problems? 38. yes no
39. How did your parents feel about your leaving school? 39. encouraged leaving
discouraged leaving
neither encouraged nor discouraged
40. What things did you like best about school? 40. _____
41. What things did you like least about school? 41. _____
42. What school subjects did you like best? 42. _____
43. What school subjects did you like least? 43. _____
44. Did the requiring of your taking any particular course or courses influence your decision to leave school? Which? 44. yes no
45. Did the dislike for a certain teacher influence your decision to leave school? 45. yes no
46. Did you fail any elementary grade? 46. yes no
47. If so, which one or ones? (If you failed a grade more than once, mark above it the number of times you failed it). 47. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
48. How do you think the schools might have better helped you? 48. _____
49. Did you work while in school? If so, why? 49. yes no
50. If so, how many hours per week? 50. 1-5, 5-10, 10-15, 15-20, 20-25, over 25
51. Did you live at home while attending high school? 51. yes no
52. If not where did you live? 52. relative
close family friend
others
53. Were your parents ever against your attending high school? 53. yes no
54. Were there any home conditions which influenced your decision to withdraw from school? If so, explain. 54. yes
no
55. List activities you participated in, honors you received, and offices you held while in high school. 55. _____
56. Indicate the chief reason or reasons for your withdrawal from school with a "1". Rank the next three or four reasons in the order of their importance--2, 3, 4, etc. 56. _____
disciplinary difficulties _____
entered military service _____

financial reasons _____
 illness in the family _____
 illness of pupil _____
 lack of interest in school work _____
 bored and restless _____
 marriage _____
 poor scholarship _____
 help needed at home _____
 obtained work _____
 reached legal age for school withdrawal _____
 could not get along with other students _____
 did not feel a part of school life _____
 other reasons (list) _____

Post-School Data

57. Have you received any further education since leaving school? 57. yes no
 58. If so, what course or courses were taken in the following: 58. _____
 trade school _____
 night school _____
 correspondence school _____
 other schools _____
 59. Has your education helped you secure employment in the past? 59. yes no
 60. Have you ever been sorry you quit school? 60. yes no
 61. In what way? 61. _____

 62. Since leaving school, has your feeling toward school changed in any way? 62. yes no
 63. If so, in what way? 63. _____

 64. What course or courses that you took in school have helped you since leaving school? 64. _____

 65. Are you married? 65. yes no
 66. Do you have any children? If so, how many? 66. yes no
 67. How many other dependents do you have, not counting your spouse and children? 67. _____
 68. In how many jobs or occupations have you been employed since leaving school? 68. _____
 69. What is your present job? 69. _____
 70. Is your present occupation likely to be a permanent one for you? 70. yes no

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 71. Does it have adequate possibilities as a life's occupation? | 71. <u>yes</u> <u>no</u> |
| 72. What is your present weekly income? | 72. _____ |
| 73. Do you feel that your present job is a good one? | 73. <u>yes</u> <u>no</u> |
| 74. Do you feel that a high school education could help you get a better job? | 74. <u>yes</u> <u>no</u> |
| 75. In what town are you now living? | 75. _____ |

Future

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 76. In thinking about your future, do you feel that a high school education would help? | 76. <u>yes</u> <u>no</u> |
| 77. Do you ever plan to finish your high school work? | 77. <u>yes</u> <u>no</u> |
| 78. Are you interested in night school classes? | 78. <u>yes</u> <u>no</u> |
| 79. If so, what classes would you like to take? | 79. _____ |
| 80. Are you interested in part-time day school work? | 80. <u>yes</u> <u>no</u> |
| 81. If so, what courses would you like to take? | 81. _____
_____ |

Conclusion

82. Each year we have a number of boys and girls who withdraw from high school for various reasons. Do you have any suggestions that might help make the school so interesting and helpful to these boys and girls that, at least, most of them would not withdraw, but would continue until graduation?

Fold the completed questionnaire and insert in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

"If anyone says that we cannot afford this type of educational system, the answer is that we cannot afford not to have it. The educators, the parents, and all the citizens of the community should join in providing educational opportunities for all the children of the community."

NEA JOURNAL

A STUDY OF CERTAIN
BACKGROUND FACTORS AND THE PRESENT STATUS
OF PUPILS WHO DROPPED OUT
OF THE LA CROSSE, KANSAS, RURAL HIGH SCHOOL
FROM 1940 TO 1955

by

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AN ALSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Education

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1956

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to determine answers to the following questions:

1. Who withdrew from the La Crosse, Kansas, Rural High School between 1940 and 1955?
2. What home backgrounds did they have?
3. What school backgrounds did they have? What school problems?
4. Why did they withdraw before finishing high school? What were the contributory factors?
5. What is their present status?
6. What can the school do to retain pupils until they complete their high school education and graduate?
7. How do the results of this study compare with those of other studies?

METHODS USED IN THE STUDY

The data used in this study were obtained from two sources: permanent school records and the drop-outs themselves. Of the 172 drop-outs, answers were obtained from 52, a return of 30.2 per cent. Of the 52, 19 were returned by mail and 33 questionnaires were answered during interviews. Eighty-two questions were included in the questionnaire which required 15 to 20 minutes for the drop-out to answer.

All information contained herein is based on replies from 24 boys and 28 girls.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A 30.2 per cent response was received from the 172 drop-outs. Nineteen answered by mail and 33 by interview. Of the 52, 24 were boys and 28 were girls.

An average of six per cent of the enrollees withdrew from school during the 15 years covered (1940-1955); 55 per cent were boys and 45 per cent were girls.

On the basis of the inadequate data available, the median IQ for the group was 95-96, which would indicate that most of them could have successfully completed high school.

Little actual influence of physical defects on the withdrawals could be noticed, altho 21 per cent of them listed defects at the time of withdrawal. The only unquestionable health reasons for withdrawal were the six who listed pregnancy.

The median age for respondents at the time of responding was 22-23 years; for boys the median was 26-27, and for girls 20-21.

A total of 38 per cent of the respondents were members of the Catholic Church, 35 per cent were Protestant members, eight per cent were Protestant non-members, and 19 per cent had no preference. According to attendance, the girls had stronger religious tendencies than the boys. Catholics attended better than Protestants. Since dropping out, fewer Catholics attended, but attended oftener; and about the same number of Protestants attended as before, but oftener.

The original nationality of the drop-outs was predominantly

German, with strong Czech and Bohemian representations. Also Irish, Russian, English, Dutch, Scotch, Indian, and Jewish (not a nationality, actually) were mentioned.

All parents were citizens of the United States. Parents of the girls were all natural-born citizens, but nine parents of the boys were naturalized citizens.

Fifty-two per cent of the drop-outs knew two languages (German, Bohemian, Czech). Ninety per cent liked to read, 81 per cent had a quiet spot in which to study undisturbed.

Most common grade finished by the parents was the eighth. There were 20 who had not completed grade school.

Fifty-seven per cent of the siblings had a high school education. Twelve per cent had attended college.

The average number in household at the time the pupil was in school was 6.3 persons (6.6 for boys, 6.1 for girls). Average number of siblings was 4.4 (4.7 for boys and 4.2 for girls). Only four drop-outs were the only child at home at the time they were in school. Sixty-three per cent lived in a normal family grouping--father, mother, siblings, and no others.

Most common occupations of parents were farming, small business owning, and skilled work. Eighty-three per cent were home owners.

Eighty-six per cent of those answering had lived at home during the time they were in school.

Twenty-six of those answering had failed at least one grade. No one grade was at fault. Grades failed were first, third, fifth, and seventh.

Drop-outs were not generally retarded at eighth grade, since the median age for graduation was 14 years. The most common age for dropping out was 16 years. The most common grade level class at time of withdrawal was split between freshman and junior. Greatest loss of boys occurred during the last half of the freshman year; greatest loss of girls was during the last half of the junior year. Thirty-eight per cent of the boys and 25 per cent of the girls failed at least one high school subject. Sixteen failed 25 courses (an average of 1.6 per pupil). Most common failures were in English and mathematics.

Drop-outs felt that some or no help was received from adults, teachers, or friends on their personal problems. Slightly less than half had difficulty with a particular teacher. Half of them felt that the teachers had tried to help.

Fifty-four per cent of the parents took a definite stand against the pupil's withdrawing from school.

Seventy-one per cent of the boys and 46 per cent of the girls listed no activities. Seven boys averaged 1.7 activities apiece, and 15 girls averaged 2.7 apiece. One girl listed seven activities.

The drop-outs recognized there were many reasons for their withdrawals. Dislike of school, marriage, home conditions, and school problems seemed to predominate. Main reasons for boys' withdrawals were family illness, entered military service, lack of interest in school, financial reasons, bored and restless, and did not feel a part of school life. Marriage, lack of interest in school work, and did not feel a part of school life were listed

most often by the girls.

Eighty-five per cent answering said home conditions did not influence their withdrawal, but main factors at home that did influence withdrawal were financial needs and that the pupil's help was needed at home. Nine per cent of the parents actually opposed the pupil's attending high school.

There was a lack of well-defined likes and dislikes of things about school. Best-liked "things" were specific classes, sports, and activities. Least-liked were other specific classes, the faculty, and studying.

Favorite subjects were home economics for the girls and mathematics and shop for the boys. Greatest dislikes were English for the boys and mathematics for the girls. In only three instances did the drop-outs say their withdrawals were caused by their having to take certain required courses.

Twenty-seven per cent were influenced to leave by their dislike of a certain teacher.

Forty-three per cent (33 per cent of boys and 52 per cent of girls) worked while in school. Thirty-three per cent worked because the money was needed, and 66 per cent worked for personal reasons. Sixty-five per cent of them worked 20 hours or more per week.

Thirty-six per cent lacked well-defined occupation goals. The best-defined were farming and homemaking. Only 19 per cent entered the occupation they had hoped to enter after leaving school. The most agreement between goals and attainment were in farming and homemaking.

The average number of jobs held by boys since dropping out of school was 3.0; for girls who had worked, 3.0; for all girls, 1.8; and for all drop-outs, 3.0.

At present the most common occupation of girls was home-making, and of boys farming. Very little skill was represented in their occupations.

Eighty-five per cent of the boys felt their present occupation offered adequate possibilities for life, so it would be permanent. The occupational outlook for girls was very narrow because of the interference of marriage. Only two felt their jobs were adequate for life. The most common wage for boys was \$40-\$60 weekly; only one girl earned above \$40. The highest income was a farmer's, \$8000 annually.

Eighty-eight per cent of all boys felt present job was a good one, but a high school education would help them get a better one.

Eighty-five per cent of all drop-outs lived in Rush or adjoining county.

Thirty-one per cent had no hobbies. The boys had a few more than the girls; 36 to 25 per cent showed lack of interests.

Sixty-nine per cent of all had received no further education; 50 per cent of the boys had received more (while in service) and 14 per cent of the girls had.

Sixty-eight per cent were sorry they had quit, because they felt now that they needed the education and it would help them get a better job. Forty-six per cent said their feelings toward school had changed. They felt now that education is needed and

they would like to be back.

The courses with the most value since leaving school were home economics, English, and mathematics.

Seventy-one per cent of all felt that a high school education would help in the future. Nineteen per cent planned to finish some day. Six boys and seven girls were interested in night school classes. One boy and six girls were interested in part-time day school work. Secretarial and senior required courses were the most-desired ones.

Suggestions for improvement of the school were vague, but generally centered in having a more personalized interest in the pupils on the part of the teachers.